

RICE UNIVERSITY

**“Kin with Kin and Kind with Kind Confound”: Pity, Justice, and Family Killing in Early
Modern Dramas Depicting Islam**

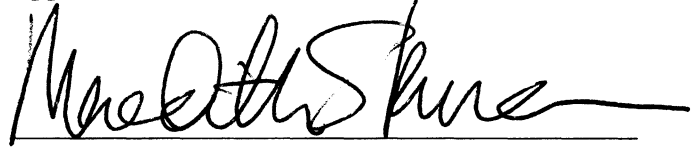
by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Doctor of Philosophy

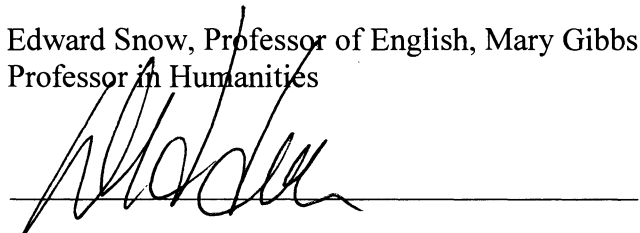
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DECEMBER 2011

Abstract

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By Joy Pasini

This dissertation examines the early modern representation of the Ottoman sultan as merciless murderer of his own family in dramas depicting Islam that are also revenge tragedies or history plays set in empires. This representation arose in part from historical events: the civil wars that erupted periodically from the reign of Sultan Murad I (1362-1389) to that of Sultan Mehmed III (1595-1603) in which the sultan killed family members who were rivals to the throne. Drawing on these events, theological and historical texts by John Foxe, Samuel Purchas, and Richard Knolles offered a distorted image of the Ottoman sultan as devoid of pity for anyone, but most importantly family, an image which seeped into early modern drama.

Early modern English playwrights repeatedly staged scenes in the dramas that depict Islam in which one member of a family implores another for pity and to remain alive. However, family killing became diffuse and was not the sole province of the Ottoman sultan or other Muslim character: the Spanish, Romans, and the Scythians also kill their kin. Additionally, they kill members of their own religious, ethnic, and national groups as family killing expands to encompass a more general self destruction, self sacrifice, and self consumption. The presence of the Muslim character, Turk or Moor, serves to underscore the political and religious significance of other characters' family killing.

Part of the interest of English playwrights in the Ottoman history of family killing is that England had suffered its own share of family killing or the specter of it during the Wars of the Roses, the Babington Plot against Queen Elizabeth's life, and the martyrdom of many English

during the Protestant Reformation. Through an analysis of such plays as Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, and Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine I and II*, among others, I argue that English playwrights represented family killing to contend with England's past of civil war, its Protestant Reformation present, and its political future. The dramas that depict Islam portray rulers who elevate empire building above kinship bonds and who feel no pity for those in their own kinship, national, or religious groups. The plays illustrate that the emotion, pity, leads a ruler to the just action of extending mercy and that the converse, lack of pity, leads a kingdom or empire to injustice and destruction. The plays ultimately declare empire building unjust because it is pitiless, creating an argument against empire for English audiences.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of the Rice University English department, my family, and a wide circle of friends. First, I am grateful to my committee members. Dr. Meredith Skura's graduate seminars initially inspired me to explore the topic of this project, and her feedback over the years encouraged me to continue it to completion. Dr. Edward Snow's astute questions have provided a basis for improving the project in the future, and Dr. David Cook's attention to detail and meetings over the years have undoubtedly made this a better dissertation.

As I worked on this project, I was often acutely aware of the absence of Dr. Elizabeth Dietz who would have been one of my committee members were it not for her passing in 2005. I know that her feedback would have been an invaluable resource for me.

Thanks are also due to the professors from my M.A. program at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Dr. Sara Deats and Dr. Lagretta Lenker, who initially sparked my interest in studying the early modern period and who supported me from afar.

My parents, Peter and Suzanne Pasini, influenced this project through their conviction that a college education was important, despite (or perhaps because) of the fact that they did not have one themselves. My father also used to quote from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, although I am positive that he never read any of them nor saw them performed. My sister, Jana Gaspard's early advice about doctoral education rang true many times throughout my completion of this project, and I definitely should have listened to her from the beginning. I know that she wanted me to finish this.

One of the best parts of graduate school is being surrounded by so many brilliant and wonderful people whom you can call friends. I owe special thanks to my friends who provided emotional support during these years, and I will never forget the help they provided me when I was hospitalized in 2008-9: Teresa Wei, Jill Delsigne, Jayme Yeo, Sophie Weeks, Amelia Scholtz, Basak Demirhan, and Elizabeth Womack. During the final stretch, getting together with Heba Khan alleviated my stress. Also, over the last year or so, it has been great to reconnect with Shelley Deblasis, with whom I share many memories of Palm Lake apartments in Tampa, Florida and many of the same dissertation/graduate school challenges. Although I have already mentioned Elizabeth Womack, she deserves to be singled out: she is my closest friend who has supported me through every difficulty I have had in the last eight years, which includes the death of my father in 2007. She also introduced me to Té, House of Tea, the teashop with the ideal ambiance for completing dissertations and theses. Since I find it almost impossible to work at home, it is doubtful I would ever have written a word without going there. Finally, I would like to thank Loren Buckner. She has taught me that relationships can endure and even grow stronger across a distance, and in the moments when I could not see it, she continued to believe that it was meaningful to finish this dissertation.

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INTRODUCTION

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

--Genesis 22: 9-12

Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword. For I have come to set

a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
and one's enemies will be those of his household.'

--Matthew 10: 34-6

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.

--John, 3: 16¹

This project explores the intersections between early modern drama representing Islam and revenge tragedy by analyzing a subset of the Islamic dramas that are either revenge tragedies or that focus heavily on revenge. In this intersection lies the representation of the Ottoman sultan as pitiless murderer of fellow Muslims and his own family members in pursuit of power within an empire.

As the epigraph indicates, Biblical instances of the sacrifice or killing of family members hold out these deeds as proof of one's devotion to God. However, kin killing in

the Islamic dramas is proof of devotion to imperial aims and is negative. The emperors and other rulers, whether Muslim or not, destroy family, religious, and national bonds to forge elective bonds of friendship across cultures in order to build an empire. The plays explore the tenuous quality of these bonds and how they fail to endure. The Muslim characters and the imperial settings are then associated with betrayal, vengeance, and kin killing.

In some of the plays, the Muslim characters are the kin killers. But in others, the Muslim characters are used to draw attention to the injustice of the kin killing and do not commit this atrocity themselves. The narratives circulating in early modern England about the Ottoman sultan made this function possible. These narratives recounted the wars among him and his sons over the succession to the sultanate. In them, the sultan killed his own sons, and his own sons killed one another. The themes and plot of a subset of the Islamic dramas are influenced by these narratives that portray the Ottoman sultan as a merciless kin killer. Examples of dramas that belong to this subset are *Tamburlaine I, II* (1587-8), *Titus Andronicus* (1592?), *The Spanish Tragedy* (1588), *The City Night Cap* (1624), *The Raging Turk* (1618), *The Courageous Turk* (1619), *The Renegado* (1624), *Selimus* (1592), *Othello* (1604), *Osmond, the Great Turk* (1619), *the Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607), the closet dramas, *Mustapha* (1594) and *Alaham*, (1600) and an anonymous play written in Latin called *Solymanndae Tragoediae* (1581).

However, narratives about the murderous actions of the Ottoman sultan and his sons were by no means the only factor influencing English playwrights to make kin killing one of the main concerns in the imperial setting of a number of Islamic dramas.

The family killing that had occurred in the Roman Empire and England's own history of civil war in the fifteenth century war of the Roses also inform the plots of the subset of plays I explore. Therefore, this subset coincides not only with the concerns of revenge tragedies but also with the concerns of history plays.

For revenge tragedies, those concerns are to examine the line between justice and revenge, and the Islamic dramas do this in part through the use of Muslim characters and imperial settings. In the process, the plays establish that the foundation of justice is an appropriate emotional response from the ruler to his subjects and from one human being to another. This emotional response is pity. The plays demonstrate the complexity involved with feeling pity within and across cultural boundaries in an empire. The affective climate of empires such as the Spanish, Roman, and Ottoman is portrayed as either uniformly devoid of pity or as unable to feel pity acceptably. As a result of this affective climate, empires as political structures are declared unjust by the plays. Therefore, I contend that the plays create an argument against empire for audiences, perhaps unintended by the playwrights, but present nonetheless.

Historical Extent of the Representation of the Ottoman sultan as kin killer

The succession to the Ottoman sultanate worked much differently than the succession to the English monarchy, and this gave rise to the dramatic representation of the Ottoman sultan as kin killer.² Primogeniture did not exist. Halil Inalcik explains that "there was no law or custom regulating succession to throne. According to old Turkish beliefs, the appointment of the sovereign was in the hands of God and, therefore, to

establish a fixed law of succession or actively to challenge the enthroned sultan was to oppose the will of God.”³

After a sultan’s death, wars often ensued to decide which son would be his successor. Brothers killed one another in their quest for power: “the outcome of a fratricidal struggle for the throne was regarded as a divine decree. The defeated princes usually sought refuge in enemy lands, and consequently the Ottoman Empire faced the continual threat of civil war.”⁴ Although the brother who won was considered God’s chosen, that did not mean that the other brothers might not later challenge the sultan’s claim to rule or that he would not fear that possibility.

Sultan Murad I (1362-89), only the third of the Ottoman dynasty, established the precedent for fratricide when he killed his brothers after he came to power.⁵ Sultan Mehmed II (1444-60), known as the Conqueror, because he conquered Constantinople in 1453, then codified the it into the Law of Fratricide, which declared that it was lawful for the succeeding sultan to kill all of his brothers upon assuming power: “for the welfare of the state, the one of my sons to whom God grants the sultanate may lawfully put his brothers to death.”⁶ He hoped that this law would help avoid protracted civil war in the empire, as the sultan’s challengers would be eliminated.

The law of fratricide was helpful in holding the Ottoman state together during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but soon began to be counterproductive. Sons knew that the death of their father would be a life or death situation for them, so they worked hard to gain followers and amass an army to face this occasion. Military and other support was made possible because a sultan’s sons were, at this time, sent to govern

provinces in Asia Minor, and their experience there not only groomed them for the sultanate but also made them impatient for a chance at the throne.⁷

The most egregious example of the law of fratricide occurred during the reign of Mehmed III (1595-1603) who killed his nineteen brothers after ascending to the throne. His reign also marked the de facto end of the law of fratricide because he had only two sons, making fratricide a threat to the continued existence of the line descended from the first sultan Osman.⁸ In place of fratricide, brothers were confined within the palace in what was called the cage (the *kafes*).⁹ The succession passed from one brother to the next and proceeded to the next generation when no more brothers were left. Since the practice of sending the sultan's brothers (and sons) to govern provinces was ended, along with the law of fratricide, the brothers were no longer as well prepared to rule the empire when it was their turn to be sultan.¹⁰

Sixteenth century historians, playwrights, and theological writers frequently wrote about two Ottoman sultans, a father and son themselves, notorious for killing family members – Selim I (1512-20), and Suleyman I (1520-66) – although these two were not the only ones who killed family members nor was the extent of the killing undisputed by historians. The former was reputed to be responsible for killing his father sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) and the latter killed his son Mustapha. While history confirms that Selim killed his brothers, his nephews, and all of his sons except for Suleyman on his path to the throne, history is less certain that he was behind his father's death or that his father was poisoned.¹¹ Nonetheless, Robert Greene's *Selimus* and Thomas Goffe's *The Raging Turke* both represent the murder of Bayezid by Selim. Mustapha's murder by Suleyman

is represented in the closet dramas *Mustapha* written in English by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke and *Solymanndae tragoedia* an anonymous play written in Latin.

The Protestant polemical writer John Foxe also recounts Suleyman's murder of his son Mustapha. The details of Foxe's description create an image of Suleyman as cruel, underhanded, and pitiless:

In conclusion his father caused hym to be sent for to hys paultion, where vi. turkes with visours were appointed to put him to death Who cōmyng vpon hym, put (after their maner) a small corde or bowstryng ful of knottes about his necke, and so throwyng him downe vpon the ground, not suffering him to speake one worde to his father, with the twytche thereof throteled and strangeled him to death, his father stādyng in a secret corner by, & beholdyng the same. Which facte being perpetrate, afterward when the Turke would haue geuen to an other sonne of his and of Rosa called Gianger, the treasures, horse, armour, ornamētes and the prouince of mustapha his brother: Gianger cryeng out for sorow of his brothers death: phy of thee, sayth he to his father, thou impious and wretched dog, traytour, murderer, I can not cal thee father, take the treasures, the horse and armour of mustapha to thee selfe: and with that takyng out his dagger, thrust it throughe his owne body. And thus was Solyman murderer and paricide of hys owne sonnes: which was in the yeare of our Lord. 1552.¹²

While it is not possible to trace the exact genesis of some dramatic depictions, some of the descriptions in Foxe's account are also important in the dramas. Suleyman surreptitiously watches while masked men strangle his son, creating a feeling of furtive

evil. The other son who commits suicide calls his father “impious”: the link between kin killing and lack of piety becomes important in the dramas as well as Gianger’s charge that “I can not cal thee father,” which underscores the monstrous action of Suleyman that severs not only the paternal relationship between him and the murdered son but also that between him and the surviving son. Historically, Gianger did not commit suicide, and Foxe’s addition here shows an appropriate emotional response from a brother that contrasts with the father’s dispassionate one. Gianger’s shock might also be the response of Foxe’s Protestant readers were it not for his commentary that Mustapha’s killing is divine providence for Christians: “Wherin notwithstanding is to be noted the singular prouidēce and loue of the Lorde toward his afflicted Christians. For this mustapha as he was couragious and greatly expert & exercised in all practise of warre: so had he a cruell hart, malitiously set to shed the bloud of Christians: Wherefore great cause haue we to congratulate, and to geue thanks to God, for the happy takyng away of this mustapha.”¹³ Mustapha’s death prevents more Christian deaths and is therefore good from a Protestant perspective.

Richard Knolles offers a slightly different account of Mustapha’s murder. The men who strangle Mustapha are seven mutes described as “strong men, bereft of their speech, whom the Turkish tyrants haue alwaies in readinesse, the more secretly to execute their bloudie butcherie).”¹⁴ Knolles provides more description and even includes dialogue that makes Suleyman sound more monstrous than in Foxe. Knolles calls him a murderer but finds the word inadequate to convey Suleyman’s disregard of the natural feelings of a father, “(for no addition is sufficient significantly to expresse his vnnaturall villanie).”¹⁵ Suleyman also is impatient for the men to execute his son, which proves that

he is “so farre from being moued with compassion” for his son.¹⁶ The missing emotional component of compassion for family members is an important aspect of the image of the Ottoman sultan as kin killer that recurs in the dramas depicting Islam.

The reaction of Mustapha’s brother in Knolles is similar to Foxe with the important addition of Knolles having Cihangir call his father a “wicked and vngodly Cain,” so that to Cihangir who has lost his brother, Suleyman epitomizes the first Biblical fratricide.¹⁷ Although Cihangir is “honourably buried” after his suicide, Suleyman’s “couetous mind was not so troubled but that he could forthwith command all *Mustaphaes* treasures and riches to be brought to his tent: which his souldiors in hope to haue.”¹⁸

Linda McJannet summarizes other accounts of Suleyman’s murder of Mustapha, showing that this story was told and retold, building a foundation for a recurring image in the dramas. Apparently one of the most influential yet most demonizing versions of the story was Nicholas à Moffan’s *Soltani Solymanni Turcorum imperatoris horrendum facinus* translated as *The Horrible Act of Sultan Solyman emperor of the Turks* published first in 1555 in Latin and then in French and German a year later, followed by yet a second Latin edition in Paris. Hugh Goughe translated it into English in *Ofspring of the House of Ottomanno* in 1569-70, making the story more widely accessible. McJannet points out that À Moffan’s text was Knolles’ main source for his retelling of the story. William Painter also used the text as a source for his *The Palace of Pleasure*, 1567, which also discusses Mustapha’s murder. Finally, the “Turkish letters” of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, though not translated into English until 1694, did circulate in Latin in manuscript form. Though they were more reasonable in their depiction of Suleyman and

of his wife Roxolana, whose jealousy on behalf of her own son (Mustapha was her son's half brother) instigated Suleyman to the murder, À Moffan's text is responsible for a more widespread dissemination of the story's negative portrayal of Suleyman as cold and pitiless.¹⁹

Foxe's describes a profusion of family killing when he discusses Selim I's actions toward his father and other family members. Selim's murder of his father is especially underhanded because after Selim tells Bayezid that he wants to be the sultan in name only and that Bayezid can make the governing decisions, he then serves his father a banquet "infected with poyson."²⁰ Feeling the poison working in his body, Bayezid takes to the streets with his supporters who cry out their allegiance to him, and he finally succumbs to the poison and dies in the streets.²¹ Foxe concludes this section of his history by emphasizing the unnatural antipathy between father and son. "Heere mayest thou see, good Reader, a cursed broode of thys Turkish generation, where the father dieth in cursing the sonne, and the sonne raigneth by poysoning his father." He describes the killing as Selim's "barbarous cruelty" against his father in the beginning of his next section in which he also relates how Selim kills his brothers and his nephews.²²

While Foxe's text does not discuss the Jew who supposedly poisoned Bayezid, Knolles' devotes quite a bit of space to how Selim simultaneously threatens the Jew with death and bribes him with the prospect of a pension as incentives to poison his already ailing father. The Jew is Bayezid's chief physician, and presents the poison to him as a medicine. Of course, once he kills Bayezid, Selim in turn kills him.

Knolles highlights how “ambition” destroys family relationships when he discusses Selim’s ambition to be sultan that causes him to fear that Bayezid will regain power even though he is old and weak: “Wherefore to rid himselfe of that feare, he resolved most viper like before his going, to kill his father, and so most vnnaturally to depriue him of life of whom hee had first receiued life: such is the cruell and accursed nature of ambition, that it knoweth neither father, mother, brother, wife, kindred, or friend, no, sometimes not her owne children: the furie whereof was neuer in any one more pregnant, than in this most monstrous and cruell tyrant *Selymus*.”²³ Knolles’s statement here is almost exactly the idea that playwrights stage in a subset of the dramas depicting Islam. A lack of established rules for succession in an empire and the conquest that propels an empire’s territorial expansion cause a disregard for kinship bonds. Knolles’s words conjure similar images as Jesus’s words quoted at the beginning of this chapter in which family members are turned against each other and toward an outside cause. Jesus may have come to set household members against one another, but it is a very different situation when empire sets household members against one another in the dramas depicting Islam.

In Chapter 4, I examine Robert Greene’s *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks*, which dramatizes Selim’s battle for the throne. In Daniel Vitkus’s edition of the play, he argues that “the two most important sources – texts that Greene almost certainly drew upon – are Thomas Newton’s 1575 translation of Augustino Curione’s *Sarracenicarum Historiarum libri III* (Basel, 1567) and Peter Ashton’s 1546 translation of Paolo Giovio’s *Comentarii della cose de Turchi* (Florence, 1531) ... and that Greene may well have consulted other sixteenth-century descriptions of the Ottoman court, as there were numerous works

available that dealt with this subject.”²⁴ Vitkus concedes that “the Great Turk became a European bogey partly on the strength of a dynastic track record of executions, poisonings, strangulations, and general familicide.”²⁵ It is historically accurate that the Ottoman sultanate was rife with kin killing. It is the manner in which the early modern playwrights deployed the historical facts to represent the Ottoman sultan and sometimes other Muslim characters as kin killers that helped to create an image that borders on a stereotype because of its repetitive nature and its ability to render the Muslim character a one dimensional representation at times. In the chapters that follow, I examine some historical episodes of kin killing in the Roman Empire and in England as well, specifically in my chapter on the Roman play *Titus Andronicus*. It is not that kin killing is confined historically to the Ottoman Empire or to Islam, or that English playwrights thought it was, but rather that they used the image of the Ottoman sultan as kin killer to come to terms with their country’s past, its present of religious upheaval, and to critique the possibility of an imperial future.

Critical Context

My work contributes to the field of early modern studies of Islam, the Ottoman Empire, and Turk plays. To be a “Turk play,” a drama does not necessarily have to portray a Turk. It could also portray a Moor or a Persian, since “Turk” is the catch-all phrase for characters, themes, or settings associated with the Ottoman Empire and Islam. Scholars contend that early modern England sometimes conflated Ottoman Turks with Spanish or North African Moors, making the phrase “Turk play” all encompassing. However, I have chosen to use the phrases “dramas depicting Islam” or “Islamic dramas”

instead of “Turk plays” to capture better two of the plays I discuss, *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*. Being set in the Roman Empire, *Titus* is far removed from the Ottomans, and Aaron the Moor cannot be confused with a Turk. Similarly, *The Spanish Tragedy*, despite having Ottomans in the playlet, is much more about the possibility of a Spanish Empire than the Ottoman Empire. However, even if “Turk play” is not the best descriptor for these plays, narratives about the Ottoman sultan do influence them.

Studies of Islam in early modern drama have been around since the early twentieth century but have proliferated within the last 15 years. One of the first studies of what would later be called the “Turk plays” is Louis Wann’s “The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama” published in *Modern Philology* in 1915.²⁶ He studies plays “produced from 1558 to 1642 in which the events portrayed take place or could take place since the rise of the Ottoman Empire in the thirteenth century” in an attempt to answer the question “how extensive and how accurate was the knowledge of the Elizabethans regarding the Orient?”²⁷ In the process of answering, he examines the stories of “The Murder of Mustapha,” “Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek,” and “Bajazet and the Iron Cage,” finding that historians’ inaccuracies have been passed down to the dramatists.²⁸ However, he concludes that overall early modern playwrights were fairly accurate in their representations. Accuracy later becomes a key concern for other critics. Another early twentieth century critic, Samuel Chew, covers a lot of ground in his *The Crescent and the Rose*, including discussions of England’s trade with the Ottoman empire, travel writing, and the Qu’ran. He concludes his book with a chapter titled “Moslems on the London Stage” in which he discusses Tamburlaine, Selim I and Suleyman I. Surrounding Suleyman, Chew explores the legend of the Ottoman sultan’s

love for a Christian captive woman that Kyd featured in *Soliman and Persida* and in the playlet of *The Spanish Tragedy*.²⁹

Within the last 15 years, scholarship about the Turk plays received impetus from the work of Nabil Matar; his work contained two key arguments. First, Matar claimed that it was anachronistic to apply Edward Said's Orientalism to early modern England's texts, as some critics previously did.³⁰ Critics responded by agreeing with his claim and expanding upon it. Here, they charged the earlier critics not only with a reading of future conditions backwards into the past but also with confusion between the material reality of an empire and discourses of empire.³¹ They reminded readers that although early modern England may have used discourses about empire, it was not politically and economically powerful enough to conquer other nations and create an empire. For instance, in *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*, Daniel Vitkus states that "imperial fantasies did help to prepare the way for a real empire on the ground. Nonetheless, calling England an 'empire' does not mean that England was in fact a conquering, colonizing power."³² Further, Richard Barbour points out that Said "studies the discourse of the age of high imperialism. To project his findings backward, to read precolonial ethnography as if its rhetoric bespoke European dominance of the world, or its defensive tropes necessarily foretold aggressive expansion, is anachronistic."³³

Second, Matar also made some controversial statements about the dramas to which other critics responded. He privileged captivity narratives over dramas as more accurate representations of Islam. Since the authors of captivity narratives had actually resided as slaves in Ottoman territories, he considered these narratives more accurate than the dramas in their depictions of Christian men who were overpowered by their Muslim

captors. He charged the dramatists with setting up Christianity as the victor at the end of each play and with failing to indicate the power that the Ottoman Empire had. He also asserted that the dramas did not represent anything that derived from actual encounters with Muslims and that no single drama represented Muslims favorably.³⁴ Since these assertions were so emphatic, they generated two book length studies of the dramas by Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* and Jonathan Burton *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624*.

Dimmock and Burton make their disagreements with Matar clear in their introductions.³⁵ Burton contends that Muslim characters were not all one dimensional and that not all were portrayed unfavorably: “arguing that none appeared in a favorable light erases the nobility of Greville’s Mustapha and Camena, Marlowe’s Orcanes and Selim Calymath, Heywood’s Joffer, Wilson’s unnamed judge, and Peele’s Abdelmelec ... Likewise the conflation of Dekker’s Eleazar and Shakespeare’s Othello into a single type requires that one see little more in these characters than their skin color.”³⁶ Burton also responds to the idea that the dramas did not reflect Muslims or England’s experiences with Muslims accurately through his assertion that “while the Turkish plays may not accurately *reflect* actual meetings, they certainly respond to actual experiences. And while the “Turks” on English stages may not *reflect* actual Muslim people, they are no less varied in their fictions.”³⁷ Dimmock also targets the same issues in Matar’s work and offers an argument that directly counters the idea that experiences with Muslims did not figure into the dramas: “the project of this work is to put forward an opposing viewpoint: that continuing English encounters with Muslims, both imagined and ‘actual’,

multiplied and complicated notions of the ‘turke’ that had been contested from their very inception.”³⁸

I join other critics in acknowledging that representations of Muslims in early modern drama do not conform to the Saidian stereotype of the Orient dominated by England or Europe. I also acknowledge that representations were complex and multifaceted rather than one dimensional and that they were influenced by England’s actual experiences with Muslim people. However, I also intervene in the field of early modern studies of the Turk plays through an examination of significant and recurring emotions portrayed on the stage in these dramas.

The emotions that the English may have felt when confronted by the power of the Ottoman Empire and the emotions subsequently conveyed by characters in the plays are an additional important focus of this body of criticism. The most famous example of analyzing the role of emotions in encounters between East and West is Said. He discusses the fear felt by Europeans in the face of the expansion of Islam dating from Mohammed’s death in 632 and how this fear motivated the establishment and growth of Orientalism.

Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma. Until the end of the seventeenth century the “Ottoman peril” lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger, and in time European civilization incorporated that peril and its lore, its great events, figures, virtues, and vices, as something woven into the fabric of life. In Renaissance England alone, as Samuel Chew recounts in his classic study *The Crescent and*

the Rose, “a man of average education and intelligence” had at his fingertips, and could watch on the London stage, a relatively large number of detailed events in the history of Ottoman Islam and its encroachments upon Christian Europe. The point is that what remained current about Islam was some necessarily diminished version of those great dangerous forces that it symbolized for Europe. Like Walter Scot’s *Saracens*, the European representation of the Muslim,

Ottoman, or Arab was always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient, and to a certain extent the same is true of the methods of contemporary learned Orientalists, whose subject is not so much the East itself as the East made known, and therefore less fearsome, to the Western reading public.³⁹

But even the more recent critics, who argue against applying Said’s claims to the early modern period, depend heavily on assumptions about emotions. For example, most work on emotions and the Ottoman-Islamic Other concentrates on a dichotomy between England’s fear of and desire for the Other. Matar’s work cites fear of Ottoman military power and the “allure” of Islam as an inclusive religion and Islamic society as one in which an Englishman could move up the ranks politically and socially.⁴⁰

Imperial envy is related to the fear and desire dichotomy. Gerald Maclean coins the term “imperial envy,” to describe a “discursive relationship” that British travel writers held toward the Ottoman Empire, one that was more complex and varied than the discursive relationship of Orientalism.⁴¹ Maclean first dates the birth of “imperial envy” to 1453 with “the Christian loss of Constantinople to Islam,” which “created not an

absence but a lack; and in consequence of this lack, a desire that, among the British at least” was “imperial envy.”⁴² He therefore relates desire and envy to one another. He later posits that imperial envy began for the British with a desire to trade with the Ottomans during the Elizabethan era.⁴³ Maclean also identifies imperial fantasy as an important English response to the Ottoman Empire.

Vitkus agrees with Maclean when he writes, “English authors writing before 1600 express imperial envy, ambition, desire, and fantasy.”⁴⁴ He emphasizes the fear and desire dichotomy as one that ultimately affects England’s formation of its identity. He finds this dichotomy on the stage as well: “They [alien cultures and peoples] are both demonized and exalted, admired and condemned. When alien figures are presented on the early modern stage, they partake of both the xenophobic and xenophilic tendencies in English culture. They are often heroic, and always dynamic, but they are also potentially transgressive.”⁴⁵ Vitkus spends time discussing the xenophilic and xenophobic tendencies on the stage when he analyzes what he terms “conversion plays.” In these, a Christian man and Muslim woman are sexually attracted to one another and the attraction between them is presented as the threat of religious conversion of the Christian man to Islam or the fear that he will “turn Turk.” Vitkus believes that this staging of men “turning Turk” symbolized English culture’s turning toward the Mediterranean for its commercial prosperity, both the attraction and the anxiety that such cross cultural exchange provoked.⁴⁶

As an outgrowth of Vitkus’s focus on conversion plays and Matar’s privileging of captivity narratives as a more accurate depiction of Islam, Jonathan Burton examines the way that dramatists changed the basic elements of captivity narratives in order to create

an acceptable stage play. In doing so, he too discusses the dichotomy between fear and desire. The fear of physical torture, sexual violation, and enforced religious conversion that the Christian man feels when held captive by the Muslim man is neutralized and transformed into something more manageable by being placed under a heterosexual paradigm. In the plays then, Christian men desire Muslim women, and sexual union contaminates their religious faith and brings with it the possibility of conversion to Islam.⁴⁷

Though Linda McJannet's also discusses fear and desire, her stated goal is "to recognize the moments at which western writers enter into dialogue with Ottoman civilization and construct more complicated images of the East."⁴⁸ Her tool for achieving this goal is a Bakhtinian analysis of the dialogic speech in Turkish plays, and English and Turkish histories. A section of her first chapter historicizes the epithet, "the raging Turk." As part of her focus on embodied speech acts (the dialogue in plays and histories), she asserts that even the phrase "the raging Turk" was not "monologic"; instead, "the epithet 'raging' confirms Bakhtin's precept that even single words can be dialogic and that all words carry multiple meanings and associations."⁴⁹ Thus, sometimes "the raging Turk" may not have wholly negative connotations.

In choosing to explore the trope of kin killing in the plays, I step outside the fear-desire dichotomy to speak to the significance of other emotions portrayed in the dramas depicting Islam, namely pity and compassion. Critics such as Chew, McJannet, Burton, and Dimmock mention the Ottoman sultans who killed family members, but they do not examine in detail the importance for early modern England of the staging of this recurring narrative in the dramas.

In Chapter 1, “ ‘Justice, oh justice! Oh, my son, my son’: the Turk as Argument against Empire in *the Spanish Tragedy*,” I contend that *the Spanish Tragedy* connects empire building with the injustice of killing kin and countrymen and uses the Turkish characters of the play within the play to underscore that connection. I open the chapter with a quotation from Shakespeare’s *Richard II* about the Turk’s predilection for confounding kin and kind to emphasize the additional connection of kin killing to England’s past.

English audiences are warned away from an imperial future when the marriage of Balthazar and Bel Imperia does not result in a beautiful empire but instead claims the life of Horatio, one of Spain’s prominent sons. The play draws on both the general stereotype of the pitiless, merciless Ottoman sultan and the specific narrative of Süleiman’s killing his son Mustapha to foreground how the emotional response of pity is integral to just action. If pity toward kin is forsaken in order to forge an empire, then justice has also been forsaken. The Spanish are aligned with the Turk once the King fails to pity Horatio, Hieronimo, and Isabella and instead seeks an empire, construed as a friendship with the Portuguese.

I analyze how the play yokes the emotional response of pity to justice in three crucial scenes: first, Isabella’s suicide in the garden; second, Hieronimo’s encounter with Bazulto; and third, the play within the play. Throughout these scenes, *The Spanish Tragedy* pursues a thread of sameness vs. difference through the recurring trope of friendship. The friendship between Spain and Portugal is to be proven genuine through the marriage of Balthazar and Bel Imperia, but murder of kin and kind prevents the

marriage and ultimately proves the friendship false. Two false friendships – that between Spain and Portugal and that between the Ottoman sultan Solimon and the Christian knight Erasto – culminate in destruction during the play within the play, showing that any attempts to cultivate sameness through friendship cannot compensate for the differences that accumulate when national boundaries are foregone. In the play within the play, the Ottoman sultan represents the betrayal that breeds revenge; through the mirroring of the main play's action, the sultan represents how cross cultural ties forged in empire cannot be trusted and cannot last.

In my second chapter, “Let Not Your Sorrows Die though I am Dead”: The Anti Imperial Function of the Moor,” I explore *Titus Andronicus*, which as a widely acknowledged imitation of *The Spanish Tragedy*, substitutes a Moor for a Turk yet maintains the Turk's connection to kin killing that Kyd used in *the Spanish Tragedy*. Fictional Moors and Turks were at times interchangeable and could take on some of the same symbolic meanings. In *Titus*, Aaron the Moor can take on these meanings because as a Moor, he is associated with Islam, in spite of the fact that he eschews all religion and “believest no god” (5.1.71). The Moor in *Titus* functions in the same manner as the Turk in *The Spanish Tragedy* by critiquing the connection between an empire and kin killing.

Titus Andronicus also connects the emotion pity to justice. The play begins with a monumental failure of pity toward Tamora that reverberates throughout the entire play, moving the empire away from justice and toward revenge. *Titus Andronicus* demands that pity be felt across cultural lines at key points because it would facilitate coexistence for the Romans and Goths, yet the play insists at every turn that this movement of emotion is simply not possible. *Titus Andronicus* adds to the failure of pity by

dramatizing the inability of any of the characters to meet the unrealistic imperial demands of self sacrifice. These two aspects lead ultimately to the self destruction of the Roman Empire

Aaron the Moor is Titus's foil in the play. Until the point that Titus decides that Rome is "a wilderness of tigers," he prioritizes Roman honor above protection of his immediate family. On the other hand, Aaron, standing symbolically on the outside of the empire due to his blackness and evil, prioritizes his personal self above any imperial institution. This is evident in his allegiance to his child, a form of self reverence. In Act 4, Scene 2, Aaron's focus shifts from gaining power in the Roman Empire to saving his son's life. By saving his son from death, Aaron protects himself from sorrow. Conversely, when he wants to hurt others, one of his strategies is to keep them mired in their sorrows over the injuries and death of loved ones, ensuring that they will focus on themselves and the insular concerns of family rather than the welfare of the empire. For instance, as the spectacle of Lavinia's suffering body comes into view, the concerns of the Roman Empire fade from the sight of the Andronici.

Revenge is shown to be a means for the Andronici to escape sorrow when legitimate channels of justice are obstructed. Aaron betrays the Andronici and gives rise to their revenge, but he is never the literal target of their revenge in the play. He is only symbolically revenged upon in the form of a fly. Vengeance against Aaron is deferred until the end of the play when Lucius punishes him in a state sanctioned manner, and the empire reorganizes around his punishment and Tamora's.

When Aaron is captured, he is found nearby a “ruinous monastery,” (5.1.21). The proximity associates Aaron and his child with the monastery, and set in this manner against a religious backdrop, albeit a “ruinous” decayed one, it represents an inverse tableau of child sacrifice in the name of religion, war, and empire. Since the moment of Aaron’s speaking to his son is a moment of peace within the violence of the action, the play sides with Aaron and his son, if only briefly. Peace does not reside in any of the play’s prior child sacrifices. Peace resides in the moment in which Aaron does not sacrifice his son. Even amid all of Aaron’s evil, the play nonetheless points toward the peace inherent in maintaining the bond between father and child rather than sacrificing all in the interest of an empire.

In Chapter 3, “Conquest Ruthlessly Pursued”: the Image of the Turk and Kin Killing in the Argument against Empire in *Tamburlaine I and II*,” I argue that Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine I and II* declare the injustice of empire by examining it through the merciless killing of children. The common image of the Turk as pitiless conqueror is inverted, and instead, the lifeless bodies of the Turk and his wife become the image of “conquest ruthlessly pursued” (5.1.367). Zenocrate, the noble wife of Tamburlaine, demonstrates that the Ottoman sultan and his wife are worthy of the audience’s pity when she, herself, pities their suffering and deaths in *Part I*.

While it may appear that Tamburlaine conquers through an indiscriminate consumption of people and places, both plays in fact characterize his conquests as self consumption through the myth and imagery of parents killing children and the vulnerability of infants and children. Classical allusions to consumption of children through the Saturn and Ops myth, the myth of Jason and the Golden fleece, and the myth

of Tereus, Procne, and the rape of Philomel frame the overthrow of the Persian Cosroe and the Ottoman sultan Bajazeth in terms of familial killing in *Part I*. The Virgins also invoke the family relationships Tamburlaine will sever and Zabina the infants and children he will slaughter, which further emphasize the framing. Zenocrate is the only one who brings pause to the self consumption in *Part I* when Tamburlaine protects a father-daughter relationship by sparing the life of her father.

Self consumption moves from the metaphorical to the literal in *Part II* when Tamburlaine kills his own son, after Zenocrate's moderating influence on him has been extinguished by death. Although the Turks were stereotyped as kin killers, the Scythian kills his son. Defying stereotype, the Turk, Orcanes, tells Tamburlaine, after he has killed his son, "thou showest the 'difference' twixt ourselves and thee, / in this thy barbarous damned tyranny" (4.1.139-41). English audiences would most likely identify with his viewpoint. *Part II* uses the Turk, counter to stereotype, to emphasize the injustice of conquest by showing that even the Turk does not condone Tamburlaine's actions.

During the Qu'ran burning scene, Tamburlaine brags about how he has slain the "kinsmen" of "Mahomet," continuing the play's emphasis on the way that building imperial bonds consumes familial bonds in the process. Tamburlaine burns the Qu'ran in an attempt to prove that a vengeful God supports his world conquest. The only possible response is a distemper of uncertain origin, debunking the idea that Tamburlaine is the Scourge of God and suggesting that conquest could in fact be godless.

In my last chapter, "Patricide and Protestant Ascendancy in Non Canonical Dramas depicting Islam," I explore further representations of mercy, justice, and kin

killing in non canonical dramas that depict Islam. In part of this chapter, I focus on some variants of the destruction of kin and kind: namely, portrayals of threats, perceived and real, to the life of the Ottoman sultan by his own children in Robert Green's *Selimus* (1594) and in Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk* (1619).

I argue that in *Selimus*, wrestling over control of an empire's boundaries renders the boundary surrounding the family mutable. It severs family connections, and transforms family members into "strange unacquainted foreigner[s]" in the words of Bajazeth (1. 209) whose son Selimus ultimately has him poisoned as a result of the intrafamilial feud over the sultanate. Bajazeth's sons Acomat and Selimus are merciless, while Bajazeth himself feels an excess of emotion for his family that leads him to lose control of his empire. In this way, emotions for family are shown to lead directly to loss of political power.

In *The Courageous Turk*, I argue that the Ottoman sultan is characterized by a failure to achieve a mean between granting mercy and obtaining justice. He vacillates throughout the play, lacking clarity about when to offer mercy and allying with the supernatural specter of his father against his daughter. He imagines that his daughter, son-in-law, and grandsons will overthrow him and thus threatens their lives preemptively to prevent them from threatening his. He is finally undone by a self-aggrandizing display of mercy toward a wounded Christian on a battlefield.

In addition to these, I also discuss two plays, Phillip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) and *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607) by John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins, which elevate Protestantism above Islam in a much more

direct manner than *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Titus Andronicus*, or *Tamburlaine*. Those plays imply that Christian pity, mercy, and forgiveness are transcendent, but *The Renegado* specifically sets up Protestant pity, mercy, and forgiveness as transcendent. It represents Islam as lacking a conduit for mercy and Catholicism as reliant on mercy through good works. The play uses the representations of Islam and Catholicism as wanting in mercy to elevate Protestantism because its practitioners receive mercy through God's grace alone rather than through the machinations of Jesuit priests and Ottoman sultans. Catholicism is undercut and aligned with Islam when the Jesuit priest Francisco engineers an ignominious escape for the Catholic Vitelli along with his Muslim lover Donusa.

Finally, the chapter culminates in a discussion of the *Travels of the Three English Brothers*, which portrays merciful Protestant brotherhood through the image of the English Sherley brothers and pits it against scheming Muslim brotherhood through the image of the Persian brothers Calimath and Halibeck who conspire against them. Despite the conflict between the English and Persian brothers, the play still demonizes the Turk who becomes the ultimate symbol of cultural and religious difference for both the Sherley brothers and the Persian Sophy.

¹New American Bible.

² Throughout this dissertation, when I discuss the Ottoman sultans as historical figures, I use the accepted Arabic spellings of their names such as Suleyman, Mehmed, and Murad. On the other hand, when I am discussing the Ottoman sultans as characters in the plays, I

retain the early modern spellings used by the playwrights. Thus, Suleyman becomes Solimon in *The Spanish Tragedy* and Murad becomes Amurath in *The Renegado*.

³ Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire, the Classical Age 1300-1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 59.

⁴ Inalcik, 59.

⁵ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 97-8.

⁶ Inalcik, 59.

⁷ V.J. Parry, "The Period of Murad IV, 1617-48," in *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730, Chapters from the Cambridge History of Islam and the New Cambridge Modern History*, ed. M.A. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). 133-56; 133.

⁸ Parry, 134.

⁹ Inalcik, 60.

¹⁰ Parry, 135.

¹¹ Daniel Vitkus, introduction to *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 19.

¹² John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or TAMO 1570 edition (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), Book 6, page 917, accessed September 25, 2011, <http://www.johnfoxe.org>.

¹³ Foxe, Book 6, page 917.

¹⁴ Richard Knolles, *The generall historie of the Turkes* (London: Adam Islip, 1603), 763. Worldcat (OCLC: 606520310).

¹⁵ Knolles, 763.

¹⁶ Knolles, 763.

¹⁷ Knolles, 763.

¹⁸ Knolles 763.

¹⁹ Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 144-5. See also Ogier Ghiselin de Busbeq, *The Turkish Letter of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554-1562*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).

²⁰ John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* 1583 edition (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), Book 6, page 770, accessed September 25, 2011, <http://www.johnfoxe.org>.

²¹ Foxe 1583 edition, Book 6, page 770.

²² Foxe 1583 edition, Book 6, page 770.

²³ Knolles 1603.

²⁴ Vitkus, *Three Turk plays*, 18.

²⁵ Vitkus, *Three Turk plays*, 21.

²⁶ Louis Wann, "The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama" 12.7 (1915): 423-447.

²⁷ Wann, 163.

²⁸ Wann, 434.

²⁹ Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

³⁰ The following are critics who applied a Saidian perspective to early modern texts: Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1980); Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991); Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³¹The following are critics who argue this: Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624*, (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing, 2005); Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottoman in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990); Gerald Maclean, "Ottomanism Before Orientalism: Bishop King Praises Henry Blount, Passenger in the Levant," in *Travel Knowledge: European "Discoveries" in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 85-96; Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998) and *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1999); Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (Hampshire, England and New York: Palgrave, 2003).

³² Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (Hampshire, England and New York: Palgrave, 2003), 6.

³³ Richard Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576-1626* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

³⁴“The way that English dramatists, preachers, theologians and others confronted Islam and Muslims was by fabricating images about them – by arranging protagonists and geography in a manner that was disembodied from history and cultural surroundings. In the imaginatively-controlled environments of the theater and the pulpit, Britons converted the unbelievers, punished the renegades, and condemned the Saracens. As long as the sphere of action was fabrication, the victory was won by Christians.” Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 20.

And further, “From Kyd to Mason and Goffe, Muslims were portrayed on stage without any uniquely differentiating features; they exhibited the moral, or frequently the immoral, character of Shakespeare’s ‘superstitious Moor’ and Goffe’s ‘raging Turke,’ but there was no allusion in either the characterization or the dialogue in drama to specific aspects of Muslims that could be traced to actual meetings with them.” *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, 7.

³⁵Burton, 20 and Dimmock, 9-10.

³⁶Burton, 20.

³⁷Burton, 21

³⁸Dimmock, 10.

³⁹Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 59-60.

⁴⁰Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 15.

⁴¹Maclean, 86.

⁴²Maclean, 87.

⁴³Qtd. in Maclean, 89.

⁴⁴ Vitkus, 3.

⁴⁵Vitkus, 22.

⁴⁶Vitkus, 107-162.

⁴⁷Burton, 92-159.

⁴⁸McJannet, 14.

⁴⁹McJannet, 17.

“Justice, oh justice! Oh, my son, my son”: the Turk as Argument against Empire in *The Spanish Tragedy*

And if you crown him, let me prophesy
 The blood of English shall manure the ground,
 And future ages shall groan for this foul act.
 Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
 And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
 Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound.

Bishop of Carlisle, *Richard II*, 4.1.137-142¹

This passage from *Richard II* introduces my chapter on *The Spanish Tragedy* because of its line “peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels” and its focus on civil bloodshed. Using the Turk as a foil to England on the issue of killing kin and kind during dynastic disputes is a key reason that the Turk became prevalent in dramas at this time. Stories often retold about the Turk, Moor, or other Muslim character in sixteenth and seventeenth century histories and dramas are about siblings killing one another, fathers killing sons, and sons killing fathers. Although the plays indicate that audiences should be appalled by the extermination of kin by the Turks, the irony is that England had its own history of killing kin during the War of the Roses and during the upheavals of the Protestant Reformation. The dramas depicting Islam helped England come to terms with its past of civil war by elevating England’s similar civil bloodshed over and above that of “the infidel” who was presumably still enacting that which England had transcended. At the same time, the plays warned about the dangers of an imperial future founded on the

killing of kin, countrymen, and fellow Christians, which the playwrights envisioned as an essential part of building an empire as well as something that England should avoid at all costs.

I will argue that many of the dramas depicting Islam assume a cautious stance toward England's future as an empire by pointing out how empire building is predicated on the severing of bonds with kin and kind in order to transgress territorial boundaries and to forge inappropriate bonds with foreigners. The severing of kinship and national bonds is made possible by a particular emotional response felt either indiscriminately or not felt at all when the situation would most warrant it – that of pity. *The Spanish Tragedy* illustrates that pity must be circumscribed by national boundaries, and pity toward kin must not be forsaken in order to forge empire, or justice is banished from the realm.

The mention of “the Turk” in passing in Shakespeare's *Richard II* demonstrates my point: England associated the Turk with the disregard of blood bonds, religious bonds, and national bonds, and that makes him the ideal reference to place amid warnings about England's descent into the massacre of kin and kind. *Richard II* is set in England, so it is different from the majority of the plays I am exploring in this project because most of them are set in other countries. *The Spanish Tragedy*, which is the focus of this chapter, mentions Richard II during Hieronimo's patriotic masque: “The second knight that hung his scutcheon up/ Was Edmund, Earl of Kent in Albion,/ When English Richard wore the diadem. / He came likewise and razed Lisbon walls, / And took the King of Portingale in fight, /For which, and other suchlike service done, / He after was created Duke of York” (1.4.151-157). The play celebrates England's supposed subjugation of

Spain and Portugal in the past. Of course, in the 1300's when John of Gaunt reigned, Spain was not a unified country but rather consisted of kingdoms such as Castile, so Kyd is taking a number of liberties with history. During this masque, Hieronimo names the monarch who ruled at the beginning of the War of the Roses, resulting in civil war. The play then proceeds to displace all of the problematic killing of kin on to the Spanish and the Portuguese. The English, in Hieronimo's masque, fight only in a just war that targets the enemy for death.

Because of their insistence that the pursuit of empire exterminates kin and kind, the dramas that depict Islam are preoccupied with sameness vs. difference – the sameness of kinship and national bonds vs. the differences in religion, race, and ethnicity encountered when national boundaries are crossed in the pursuit of empire. Friendship, a recurring trope in *The Spanish Tragedy*, is an integral part of the play's preoccupation with sameness vs. difference.² Spain and Portugal seek to unite politically and socially and become an empire. The play construes this union as a friendship between the two countries. Formerly at war, the two countries form an elective bond of friendship because friendship's focus is on sameness and commonality that can elide differences. The friendship is to be proven genuine through the marriage of Balthazar and Bel Imperia, but murder of kin and kind prevents the marriage from coming to pass and ultimately proves the friendship false. Both false friendships – that between Spain and Portugal and that between the Ottoman sultan Solimon and the Christian knight Erasto – culminate in destruction during the play within the play, showing that any attempts to cultivate sameness through friendships cannot compensate for the differences that accumulate when national boundaries are foregone.³

The play's opening with the two nations having recently been at war emphasizes that to form an empire, differences must be violently yoked together. The first masque given by Hieronimo in which England conquers Portugal in war and then "ma[kes] [the Spanish] bow their knees to Albion" (1.5.171), while being an encomium to England, also demonstrates that the play's focus is on nations whose territorial boundaries are transgressed and whose inhabitants are forced to yield to the conqueror.⁴ This is the way that the play construes Balthazar's yielding in war and Bel Imperia's supposed need to yield to a marriage to Balthazar. Later, Hieronimo's encounter with Bazulto explores sameness and difference as does the play within the play, both of which are additional indicators that *The Spanish Tragedy* is preoccupied with what happens when differences are overlooked. Thus, the dramatic weight of the play is not on the power of the identical social class of Balthazar and Bel Imperia to obliterate national differences but on the way that the national differences pose a threat to justice in the realm. In the later dramas that depict Islam, differences multiply, and the Turk, Moor, or other Muslim character moves from the play within to take center stage. For instance, in *The Renegado*, the marriage that takes place between Vitelli and Donusa crosses social class, religious, and national boundaries, but the same basic concept is at stake about how dangerous it is to forge bonds across lines of difference and how it jeopardizes bonds of sameness.

The failure of pity surrounding the murder of kin and kind leads directly to the absence of justice and to Hieronimo's revenge. Pity toward family members is overlooked so that the friendship between Spain and Portugal can be attended to. The play exploits the visual spectacle of the imprisoned or violated body to emphasize where pity should be directed. The pitiful spectacle of Horatio's lifeless body stands in contrast

to Balthazar's body removed from his horse and taken prisoner. One body should engender pity (and does from the audience), and the other should not.⁵

II

As a revenge tragedy, *The Spanish Tragedy* introduces the theme of justice and mercy/pity in the Islamic dramas. *The Spanish Tragedy* is certainly not the first revenge tragedy. However, it was one of the most successful and most imitated.⁶ Such elements of revenge tragedy as vengeful ghosts, mad protagonists, and metatheater became widespread in large part because of *The Spanish Tragedy*. One imitated element that critics tend to overlook will be my main focus: the use of Muslim characters. In other words, when revenge tragedies use Turkish or Muslim characters, they are likely to be imitating *The Spanish Tragedy*. Other revenge tragedies such as *Titus Andronicus* and *The Jew of Malta* make Muslim characters, Turks or Moors central.⁷ *The Spanish Tragedy* helped to initiate the use of Muslim characters to explore justice, mercy, pity, and compassion, their relationship to one another, and the relationship of all of these to the expansion of borders and the forging of new communal bonds that take place when building an empire.⁸ Additionally, Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays, which were contemporaneous with *The Spanish Tragedy*, were also imitated by later dramas depicting Islam and shared many of the same concerns as *The Spanish Tragedy*.

Revenge tragedy is predicated on avenging the wrongful death of a family member, and it examines the justice involved in carrying out that vengeance. *The Spanish Tragedy* combined the pattern of placing Muslim characters in revenge tragedies with the question of how loyal a would-be emperor should be toward familial bonds of blood. This would become central in later dramas that depict Islam.

Seneca and Virgil, who wrote about the Roman Empire, influence many of the dramas depicting Islam in which a ruthless ruler who slaughters family members appears, usually an Ottoman sultan or a North African viceroy.⁹ Gordon Braden, writing about Senecan Renaissance tragedy, notes the prevalence of tyrannical emperors in Seneca's works and in the works of Seneca's contemporaries: "Imperial pathology is the recurrent, compulsive theme for historians of the time. Of the emperors from Tiberius to Nero, only Claudius escapes the charge of criminal savagery, and that largely by having to answer to one of radical incompetence; even in the last part of the century, the reign of Domitian restores the sense that murderous caprice is one of the natural tendencies of imperial rule."¹⁰ The cruelty and pathology serve as a general argument against empire, which I will contend is being employed in the plays, along with other strategies to dramatize for English audiences the perils of pursuing an imperial policy.¹¹

The Spanish Tragedy uses the Muslim characters of the play within the play to illustrate that justice depends on directing pity toward those similar to the self, which ensures loyalty to familial and national bonds. Forging socio-political bonds with others unlike the self through building an empire is represented as unjust in *The Spanish Tragedy*, precisely because it prevents rulers and citizens from feeling pity for those of their own culture, and within the plays that I explore, pity is the emotion that accompanies rational justice. Isabella expresses the connection between the two before her suicide. Following *The Spanish Tragedy*, later plays also use Muslim characters to show where pity should be directed in order to be just. Influenced by classical images of the Roman emperors, the Muslim emperor – the Ottoman sultan and Moorish viceroy – is

stereotyped as someone who rarely feels compassion or extends mercy, even to those closest to him and bonded by blood.

III

The Spanish Tragedy has three crucial scenes that emphasize the connection between pity and just action: Isabella's suicide in the garden, Hieronimo's encounter with Bazulto, and the play within the play. Before her suicide, Isabella laments, "since neither piety nor pity moves / the King to justice or compassion, / I will revenge myself upon this place/ Where thus they murdered my beloved son" (4.2.2-5). Isabella, mother to the slain Horatio, speaks these words before stabbing herself, grieved at the lack of redress for her son's murder. Possessing less power than her husband, she enacts her revenge on the murder site, the arbor where Horatio hanged, rather than on the people who plotted his murder.¹² She has altered from her earlier pronouncements that "the heavens are just; murder cannot be hid" (2.5.57) due to the heavens' and the king's apparent indifference to her son. This sentence that precedes her vengeance connects the emotion pity to justice and also to another emotion, compassion.

The word "pity" is used six times in the play, and the word "compassion" is used just once, yet these words are employed at crucial moments that attach these emotions to just action.¹³ The words "piety," "pity," and "compassion" are almost synonymous. While to twenty-first century readers and listeners, "piety" may sound removed from pity and compassion and denote religious devotion, to early modern society, "piety" would incorporate the emotion of pity. For instance, one sixteenth-century definition of "piety" is simply to offer pity, compassion, or mercy.¹⁴ Likewise, in the sixteenth-century, the noun "pity" essentially meant an inclination to compassion or mercy, and "to have

compassion” meant “to have pity,” as in Marcus’s exclamation in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, “can you heare a goodman grone And not relent, or not compassion him?” so all three of these words share common usages during this period.¹⁵

The focus on pity/mercy/compassion that recurs throughout the dramas that depict Islam is a chief means of bringing Christian values into them, even if they lack overtly Christian characters. The coming of Christ shifted the focus from “an eye for an eye” justice to a focus on mercy for sinners because Christ’s death on the cross was the sacrifice that provided forgiveness for humanity’s sins. In the dramas, Christian or Muslim characters beg other Muslim characters to feel pity and then to extend mercy to them in various situations. The emphasis on how Muslim characters, particularly Muslim rulers, lack pity/mercy/compassion elevates Christian values and holds up the Muslim character as an outlier – as all the English should never and would never want to be.¹⁶ Thus, when Isabella uses the three words “pity,” “piety,” and “compassion,” she is using words that are clearly connected to one another and to Christianity.

Isabella’s statement is structurally interesting because it juxtaposes internal and external states to one another; the juxtaposition is important because it indicates that justice in the external world correlates with the appropriate internal human emotion of pity and that when humans are unable to pity one another, they also will be unable to act justly toward one another. In Isabella’s case, the two nouns, “piety” and “pity” in the dependent clause are interrelated internal qualities that a person possesses; these internal qualities lead to the external conditions of “justice” or “compassion” of the independent clause; these are the qualities that will be manifested in the world. “Justice” and “compassion,” while grammatically nouns, are linked to action, particularly when they

emanate from a king. If the king holds these conditions internally – piety and pity – then he will take actions that will bring about justice and compassion in the world. He will feel pity when a murder happens to one of the subjects of his realm, if he is properly focused on the social bonds between himself and them, and then he will take some action that leads to greater justice in his realm. Conversely, if a King’s focus is on territorial expansion and dynastic marriage, as the Spanish King’s is, he will not even be aware that one of his own is now gone: “What accident hath happened, Hieronimo?” the king asks, oblivious to Horatio’s murder (3.12.83).

Isabella uses the word “justice” to show the kind of action that she wishes the king would take, as she does, the word “compassion,” although perhaps less apparently. Yet the sixteenth-century’s definition of compassion links it clearly to action:

1. Suffering together with another, participation in suffering; fellow-feeling, sympathy. *Obs.*
2. The feeling or emotion, when a person is moved by the suffering or distress of another, and by the desire to relieve it; pity that inclines one to spare or to succour . . . (The compassion of sense 1 was between equals or fellow-sufferers; this is shown towards a person in distress by one who is free from it, who is, in this respect, his superior.)¹⁷

The King would be expected to be moved by Isabella’s suffering and to want to relieve it. Early modern tragedies often exploit the idea that ill fortune can besiege a monarch just as it can a commoner, so the idea that the King might be able to extend his imaginative capacities to participate in the suffering of one of his subjects would not be unthinkable. Isabella believes that the King is obligated to take some kind of helpful action toward her

either to right the wrong in a public capacity (justice) or to alleviate her suffering through some more private gesture (compassion)¹⁸.

Compassion is then connected to ameliorative action. Certain thoughts or judgments lead one to feel compassion: that there has been a loss of something important, that this loss has caused suffering, and that the suffering needs to be alleviated¹⁹. When these thoughts are directed outward toward another human being who has sustained a loss, the result is compassion, and some helping action will usually occur. When these thoughts are directed inward toward one's own loss, the feeling is self pity or feeling sorry for oneself, which both have more negative connotations. Self pity can then lead to anger, and the action that springs from anger is revenge. Thus, when the thoughts that bring about compassion are focused on one's own loss, retributive action can replace ameliorative action. That is especially true under a precondition such as Hieronimo's when a public channel of justice is obstructed by those in power²⁰. This is the trajectory by which *The Spanish Tragedy* moves from pity, compassion, and justice to revenge.

IV

Leading up to the three crucial scenes that connect pity to justice, *The Spanish Tragedy* examines how friendship and marriage supersede the parent-child bond during empire building. However, the prioritization of friendship and marriage over the parent-child relationship fails and is, in the end, detrimental not only to the prospect of empire but to the continued existence of the nation itself. The play also offers initial examples of how pity is directed between countrymen Don Andrea and Don Horatio on the battlefield and how friendship flows between Don Horatio and Bel Imperia. These sincere and spontaneous feelings of pity and friendship contrast with the forced friendship between

the countries Spain and Portugal for imperial purposes. The play also contrasts the state-sanctioned killing of war with the secretive murder of Horatio by Lorenzo and Balthazar. Thus, the play sets up contrasts and parallels among appropriate and allowable pity, friendship, and killing.

Act One opens with a sense of both the friendly commingling across and the violent transgression of boundaries between nations. For example, the wars between Spain and Portugal take place “where Spain and Portugal do jointly knit / Their frontiers, leaning on each other’s bound” (1.2.22-3), but the violent shot from the opposing armies “resembl[es] th’ocean’s rage, / when roaring loud and with a swelling tide, / It beats upon the rampiers of huge rocks, / And gapes to swallow neighbor-bounding lands” (1.2.49-51). With the use of the phrase, “neighbor-bounding,” even this oceanic imagery suggests that nations brought together violently might learn to be friends, embracing the conjoining of their borders.

The play likewise opens with the king’s expression that the Spanish victory proves that justice, heaven sent, is on Spain’s side: in response to the information that Portugal will pay tribute to Spain, the King replies, “Then blest be heaven, and guider of the heavens, / From whose fair influence such justice flows!” (1.2.10-11). The remainder then unravels that sense of heaven-sent justice articulated at the beginning and dramatizes the destruction of both Spain and Portugal before they could ever join as an empire. The death of Horatio, a prominent Spanish son, lies at the foundation of this destruction and proves to be the initial human cost of empire.

As a parallel on the Portuguese side, the presumed death of Balthazar, the vicreroy’s son demonstrates that building an empire exacts this toll on sons. The

viceroys's desire to conquer Spain has "spent my people's blood, / And with their blood, my joy and best beloved, / My best beloved, my sweet and only son" (1.3.36-8). The attempt to expand Portugal's borders has consumed those closest to him by blood. Of course, as it turns out, Balthazar's death has only been postponed until the play's end.

With the death of Don Andrea, Act One exemplifies how soldiers feel pity toward their own countrymen but lack pity for the enemy on the battlefield. Pity marks both Don Andrea's death and his rescue. He is knocked from his horse to the ground and

Then young Don Balthazar, with *ruthless rage*,
 Taking advantage of his foe's distress,
 Did finish what his halberdiers begun,
 And left not till Andrea's life was done.
 Then, though too late, incensed with *just remorse*,
 I with my band set forth against the Prince,
 And brought him prisoner from his halberdiers (1.4.23-29; emphases mine)

Balthazar kills Don Andrea with lack of pity ("ruthless rage" [1.4.23]) toward the enemy. At the time of war to expand borders, the aim is to kill those of other nations, and to preserve those of your own, and at this time both Spain and Portugal are holding true to these war aims. On Spain's side, Horatio takes Balthazar prisoner and seeks to rescue Andrea's corpse from the enemy. "Remorse," another word for "pity" at this time, motivates Horatio to take this action.²¹ And not only is it remorse that motivates Horatio but it also described as "just remorse" (1.4.27). Thus, Horatio's pity for his countryman causes him to rescue Andrea's corpse in an act of justice during the war. In its initial act,

the Spanish Tragedy thus displays an example of how the emotion of pity gives rise to just actions among countrymen, which will contrast with other instances in which pity is absent or misdirected in the play.

Act 1, Scene 4 not only offers an example of proper pity but also an example of proper friendship. It depicts two people, Horatio and Bel-Imperia, who are fiercely loyal to social bonds with their own countrymen, in this case Don Andrea. Others such as Lorenzo and the King will not prove to be as loyal, but Horatio cries over Don Andrea's body. He considers himself "a friend" of Andrea's and acts in keeping with this friendship by giving Andrea a funeral and wearing his scarf "in remembrance" (1.4.37; 1.4.43). It is difficult to determine the nature of this friendship, but it is probable that it is the loyalty of fellow soldiers for one another; it is born of one Spanish soldier taking pity on another soldier from the same country.

This scene also shows how the social bond with countrymen can be transferred from one person to another. The scarf that Horatio has taken up wearing is a love token that Andrea wore to symbolize his love for Bel Imperia. This scarf symbolizes the bond between countrymen Don Andrea and Don Horatio, and the bond between Bel Imperia and Don Andrea. Don Andrea gives the scarf given him by Bel Imperia to Don Horatio. When Bel Imperia sees this, she realizes that Don Horatio is worthy of her attachment: "Had he not loved Andrea as he did, / He could not sit in Bel Imperia's thoughts" (1.4.62-3). And based on the fact that the scarf was a love token worn for her, Don Horatio vows "humbly to serve fair Bel Imperia" (1.4.54). The bond that Bel Imperia manufactures with Don Horatio though is less about romantic love and more about gratitude and friendship toward him and revenge against Balthazar. The importance of friendship in

creating bonds between individuals of the same nation in 1.4 is reiterated on the national level when the King of Spain states that “Spain is Portugal, and Portugal is Spain; we both are friends, / Tribute is paid” and the scarf that passes from Horatio to Don Andrea is paralleled by the tribute that passes from Portugal to Spain. However, the play proves that the friendship between Spain and Portugal is untenable.

Of course, to solidify the bond between the two countries, the two leaders and Lorenzo want to arrange the exogamous marriage of Bel Imperia with Balthazar when she has already pledged herself to Horatio. The marriage as a means to friendship between the nations is reiterated as the King tells the Portuguese ambassador to “advise thy king to make this marriage up, / for strengthening of our late-confirmed league; I know no better way to make us friends” (2.3.10-12). Lorenzo advises Balthazar of the possibility that Bel Imperia will feel pity for him, which will lead her to form a bond with him: “she in time will fall from her disdain / And rue the sufferance of your friendly pain” (2.1.7-8). The Spanish and the Portuguese express much hope that allegiance to kinship bonds will compel Bel Imperia to marry Balthazar. Balthazar, the foreigner, hopes that Bel Imperia’s bonds with her brother and father will motivate Bel Imperia to love him out of obligation: “yet might she love me to content her sire; ... yet might she love me as her brother’s friend” (2.1.21; 23). The King hopes that the threat of his withdrawing his love will motivate her (2.3.8), and he tells her father Castile that “young virgins must be ruled by their friends” (2.3.43). Bel Imperia though has already transferred her bonds with Don Andrea to his countryman Horatio, and she will not be persuaded to marry his murderer. Thus, her allegiance to kin will not compel her to transgress national boundaries for her marriage. By rejecting this cross national bond, she also rejects the potential of the

offspring of mixed ethnicity that would result. The Spanish King counts on the potential of a child to inherit his kingdom as a reason for the Portuguese king to wish for the proposed match: “And if by Balthazar she have a son, / He shall enjoy the kingdom after us” (2.3.20-21). One son Horatio is then killed in the hopes of this other son coming forth.

This son killing continues the machinations of war – war, which in *The Spanish Tragedy*, is construed as a legitimate means of killing in the national interest but which is the prelude to more nefarious killing undertaken by Lorenzo. What began as the joining of Bel Imperia and Balthazar after the state sanctioned killing of war has transformed into personal and secret murder, as Bel Imperia demonstrates with her cry of “Murder, murder!” (2.4.62). The murderers are not war heroes but in Hieronimo’s description have severed ties with humanity to become “savage monster[s], not of human kind” (2.5.19). Horatio has not been “conquered” honorably in war but “betrayed” (2.5.47).

In some of the other dramas depicting Islam, when the Turkish sultan is the main character, war becomes just as corrupt as Lorenzo and Balthazar’s slaying of Horatio. War becomes personal rather than public, as the sultan is consumed by rage and ignores the conventions of honorable conduct in war in order to exterminate family members indiscriminately. The killing in war becomes murder. Horatio’s slaying is similar: The seeds of it are planted in war. Bel Imperia is the empire that would be forged through the force of war. As though realizing her own integral connection to war and in defiance of others’ plans, she and Horatio thus enact a mock war, which unites their limbs: “put forth thy hand, / That it may combat with my ruder hand ... nay, then, to gain the glory of the field, / My twining arms shall yoke and make thee yield” (2.4.36-7; 44-5) and will lead to

sexual union: “Oh, let me go! For in my troubled eyes / Now mayst thou read that life in passion dies” (2.4.46-7). This union opposes the union of countries, begun through war, but meant to culminate through her marriage to Balthazar.

Only injustice is meted out for the deaths of sons in *The Spanish Tragedy*. For instance, while the audience has just witnessed the actual murder of Horatio, a murder that the Spanish king will never prosecute, in the Portuguese court, Alexandro is nearly prosecuted for a murder that never happened, and his execution is narrowly averted by the arrival of a Spanish ambassador who proves that Villuppo has engaged in treachery. As Hieronimo’s sorrows begin over his son, sorrow is abated for the Portuguese viceroy when he receives news that his son Balthazar is alive and well. Hieronimo’s line of succession is ended but the Portuguese viceory’s is continued when he discovers that his son is still alive. (3.1.14).

Act 3, Scene 2 contrasts the loss of Hieronimo’s parent-child bond and the villain, Lorenzo’s lack of social connections – feigned friendships – which both eventually lead to a similar focus on the self. Hieronimo’s loss of a son shows the precarious nature of the self when confronted by the severing of a familial or social bond; that severing threatens the continued existence of the self.²² Hieronimo states, “O life, no life, but lively form of death!” (line 2). It is his son who has died, but Hieronimo too feels that his life has ended. Strangely, Lorenzo’s statement at the end of 3.2 - “I’ll trust myself; myself shall be my friend” - has something in common with Hieronimo’s “no life, but lively form of death!” Both are insular, a turning in on the self; Hieronimo’s is perhaps less obviously so, yet still it is apparent that the death of a son has resulted in the death of self.

Lorenzo is a villain who is attached to no one. He employs Serberine who is Balthazar's servant and then manipulates Balthazar himself in order to destroy the bond of sameness between Hieronimo and Horatio. Destroying the bond of sameness will create the marriage of differences between Bel Imperia and Balthazar, also known as the friendship between Spain and Portugal. After these misdeeds, he must turn back toward himself for survival. By the end of 3.2., Lorenzo is eschewing even feigned friendships to look only to the self: "myself shall be my friend" (line 122). His sense that his trust in others will be misplaced contrasts with Hieronimo's sense at the beginning of 3.2 that his trust in divine justice will be misplaced: "O sacred heavens .../How should we term your dealings to be just,/ If you unjustly deal with those that in your justice trust?" (3.2.10-11). Lorenzo never trusts anyone to begin with, but Hieronimo possesses a deep trust in the justice system that is betrayed. Lorenzo's focus on befriending himself echoes the other friendships in the play between Don Andrea and Horatio and between Spain and Portugal, which will be cemented by the marriage of Balthazar and Bel Imperia. After Lorenzo's attempt to clear the way for an imperial marriage, his movement inward and away from friendships portends doom for this empire built on the notion of "friendship" between Spain and Portugal. This shunning of friendship rather aligns the budding empire with the destroyed friendship between Don Andrea and Horatio and emphasizes that empire is founded on the destruction of social bonds.

Opposing the feigned friendships, the microcosm of the genuine parent-child bond brings the key issues of *The Spanish Tragedy* to the fore. A parent's own identity may be intensely connected to the parent-child bond. Scott McMillan notes that, during the Renaissance, the loss of a child was construed in terms of the loss of one's own

identity.²³ Thus, Hieronimo's laments over the lack of justice in the world at the beginning of 3.2 highlight the closeness of the bond between him and his son when he says, "If this incomparable murder thus / Of mine – but now no more – my son / Shall unrevealed and unrevengèd pass..." (lines 7-9). The emphasis on the word "mine," created as Hieronimo interrupts himself, shows how close this bond was for him and how integrally connected to his identity was the bond with his son. The literal meaning of the line, "of mine – but now no more – my son" is that his son no longer exists on the earth. However, the phrasing is ambiguous, and some double meaning seems possible. Has Horatio ceased to be his son at all because of the murder? It could be if we read the line as "Horatio is not my son anymore" ("but now no more – my son"). Death of the child does not generally erase the bond, but one interpretation of Hieronimo's phrasing is that it has been.

If the murder has brought him to the point of a life that resembles death to him, then it is all the more likely that he will expect pity from those around him. "Pity" is emphasized when Pedringano has just been hanged, and the hangman brings Hieronimo the letter he had written that implicates Lorenzo and Balthazar in Horatio's death. The speech where it appears is yet another of Hieronimo's in which he discusses the absence of justice and how he will need to beg for it from the court, and he states, "banned with bitter execrations be / the day and place where he [Horatio] did pity thee [Balthazar]" (3.7.66). Whether or not Horatio was motivated by pity to spare Balthazar's life on the battlefield is unclear because Hieronimo is the only one who offers up this explanation, but this mention of the emotion pity is telling in the midst of a call for justice because it highlights how Hieronimo perceives that Horatio misdirected his pity. When Horatio

feels “remorse” for Don Andrea, his countryman, it is described as “just.” In this case though, Horatio’s pity for Balthazar is considered in juxtaposition to the injustice of his murder and the failure of the king to redress it. This pity being misdirected across national lines has led to the injustice, which will cause Hieronimo to “cry aloud for justice through the court, / [. . .] / and either purchase justice by entreats / Or tire them all with my revenging threats” (3.7.71-3). Entreaty should engender pity in the court for Hieronimo’s loss and lead to justice. If Hieronimo cannot gain justice, he will resort to revenge. Here, justice is opposed to revenge. The absence of ‘just’ pity leads to revenge.

Act 3, Scene 10 explores the reasons behind the hoped for relationship that has breached justice for Hieronimo and Horatio. It is at this point, as Bel Imperia is released from prison, that her words to her brother, “thou art no brother, but an enemy!” hearken back to the war, which opens the play²⁴. Lorenzo’s scheming to create an imperial marriage across cultural lines has, in Bel Imperia’s eyes, obscured the sibling bond so that she is treated no differently than someone who is not kin. While her description of a mock war between her and Horatio in the arbor was tinged with romance, her description in this case is laced with outrage and fear, and indeed relates events that parallel the taking of a prisoner in war, being “affrighted” by the enemy’s “weapons drawn,” the sense of an army of troops (“amidst a crew of thy confederates”), and then being shut away “where none might come at me” (3.10.25-34).

The main impetus for Lorenzo’s and Balthazar’s murder of Horatio is that Bel Imperia’s affection for him stands as a barrier to the state marriage of Bel Imperia and Balthazar, and the Spanish King and Portuguese viceroy are relying on that marriage to seal the bond of friendship between the two countries and join them as an empire. The

marriage is one that is in keeping with Bel Imperia's social class as the daughter of the duke and niece of the king, so it creates a bond of sameness within a social class, and since both Portugal and Spain are Catholic, it also creates a bond of religious sameness. Yet although bonds of sameness can be seen, the play suggests that these are not sufficient to overcome the dangers of national difference.

The conversation in 3.10 that takes place between Bel Imperia and Lorenzo focuses on social class as the reason that Lorenzo shut his sister away so that she would not be "found so meanly accompanied" (3.10.57). Bel Imperia understands him to be lying, as is suggested by her sarcastic response when she directs questions about it to Lorenzo and Balthazar, "Even so, my lord? And you are witness / That this is true which he entreateth of?" (3.10.62-3). And her words, "but why had I no notice of his ire?" draw attention to the fact that Lorenzo and Balthazar are lying about the renewal of her father's anger over her affection for Don Andrea (3.10.73). Lorenzo's concerns over the mismatched social class of Bel Imperia and her various love interests are one of the main spoken explanations that the audience receives for his murder of Horatio. This explanation though is pulled out only when Bel Imperia needs to hear some reasons for their treatment of her. Bel Imperia is suspicious about its authenticity, which casts doubt on whether the King is still indeed angry. Overtly though, the play is concerned with matching Bel Imperia appropriately with another member of her social class, but it is equally concerned with the negative consequences brought about by the attempt to achieve that match. The character most focused on bringing about the match is also the most untrustworthy character in the play, and nothing good comes from the desire to have Bel Imperia and Balthazar marry.

In addition, that the drama is focused on the perils of the cross national marriage rather than the suitability of like social class is apparent in 3.10 when Bel Imperia, Lorenzo, and Balthazar discuss a mysterious fear surrounding the possibility of love between the two. First, Balthazar states the common early modern trope of being ensnared by a lady and having one's liberty curtailed by love. However, the play expands on that through Bel Imperia's cryptic statement that she fears herself "as those that what they love are loath and fear to lose" (3.10.98-99). Although there may be other interpretations of this line, I would contend that Bel Imperia fears the loss of self that will accompany this love, a threat that she does not reference in her love for her countrymen Don Andrea and Don Horatio. And while Balthazar has already discussed lost liberty, he has not specifically mentioned fear, but Bel Imperia attributes a similar fear to him as well, which he never denies. This fear is recapitulated in later dramas such as *The Renegado* or *A Christian Turned Turk* when cross national and cross religious marriages are contemplated or consummated.

In addition to the cross national marriage, revenge is another motive for Horatio's murder. This motive arises at the end of 2.1 when Lorenzo tells Balthazar "your staying stays revenge. / Do you but follow me and gain your love; / Her favor must be won by his remove" (2.1.134-6). The revenge is for Horatio's having spoken words that win Bel Imperia's love and for his winning on the battlefield where he forces Balthazar to become his prisoner (2.1.111-133). The perceived wrongs combine affronts in love and war, and Balthazar complains of how Horatio has "ta'en my body by his force / and now by sleight would captivate my soul" (2.1.130-1).

The play confronts us with many images of the imprisoned or violated body: Don Andrea's corpse, Don Horatio's body hanging in the arbor, Balthazar's body removed from his horse and taken prisoner, Bel Imperia imprisoned, Alexandro wrongfully imprisoned. Then, the play ends with the play within, which emphasizes the disguised bodies upon which the illusion of theater depends. Balthazar's body taken by force, which fuels his desire for revenge, is a part of this trope, although his stay with Lorenzo and the king's wining and dining of him in court hardly qualifies as imprisonment. It especially does not when compared to Bel Imperia's actual sequestering in a room in her father's house. But still, Balthazar desires revenge for the fall in battle that led to his imprisonment. In this play, that has so many layers of audience, the theater audience too is directed to feel pity. Clearly, the audience's pity in the play is meant to rest with Hieronimo's plight in which the absence of "just" pity fosters his desire for revenge. Balthazar's desire for revenge is not compelling to audiences, and it serves as a contrast to Hieronimo's more legitimate revenge motive.

V

Along with the play within the play, Act 3, Scene 13 is one of the cruxes of my argument that *The Spanish Tragedy* traces how a lack of pity for kin and kind leads to injustice because it foregrounds extreme versions of pity and of kinship, albeit versions corrupted by the breach of justice that has taken place with Horatio's death. In the opening of 3.13, Hieronimo states that he will revenge Horatio's death "under kindship" (24). "Kindship" denotes "kindness," which in turn denotes "kinship."²⁵ Drawing on this denotation of the word, Hieronimo will hide behind his near relationship to the King and Lorenzo to disguise his intentions of revenge. As a fellow countrymen and arbiter of

justice in the realm, they will not suspect his intentions. Yet he prioritizes his kinship for his son over and above that of his king and countrymen. The grief over his son's murder and the desire for revenge cause his allegiance to kinship bonds to become increasingly narrow; the view no longer extends beyond his son.

It is not just kindness, which is central in the Bazulto scene, but also pity.

Hieronimo himself demonstrates that the king's failure to feel pity has reverberated outward. Act 3, Scene 13 shows Hieronimo's vacillation between excess pity and lack of pity, which is a result of how the emotion is now disordered throughout the realm.

Hieronimo cannot find the mean, and pity will no longer lead to just decisions. In both the moments when Hieronimo exhibits excessive pity and those in which he exhibits a lack of pity for others, what compromises his ability to render judgments is that he can no longer step outside the boundaries of self to feel pity for others. Thus, his excess pity is, in truth, self pity. And while the play makes the point that pity for those similar to the self is functional and necessary to motivate just action toward others, it simultaneously contends that self pity leads one away from justice and toward a self-centered madness.

When Hieronimo first encounters Bazulto in 3.13, he calls him "father," which can certainly signify Hieronimo's acknowledgement of the man's age, but it is also projecting his own identity of parent on to him before he has confirmation of it, for it is not until several lines later that he reads "the humble supplication of Don Bazulto for his murdered son" (3.13.78-9). For most of the time after (and even before) reading this information, Hieronimo cannot see the other human being in front of him for who he is, as a separate person, despite the identical circumstances of a murdered son. Rather than hearing the details of Bazulto's story, he argues, "no, sir, it was my murdered son, / Oh, my son, my

son, oh, my son Horatio!” (3.13.81-2). It is this instance of Hieronimo’s overidentification with Bazulto that could be mistaken for pity and compassion, though it is actually viewed by the other citizens as “kindness,” that is as behavior in keeping with Hieronimo’s higher social class.

Some might consider Hieronimo’s offering of his “handkercher” and of other objects in his purse and of his proclamation that “all as one are our extremities” to be motivated by the right sort of pity, the sort that connects one to other human beings and understands a commonality in humanity’s suffering (as with King Lear on the heath) (3.13.91-2). But that proclamation of (universal) oneness is in fact the problem. Hieronimo cannot see outside the self, and indeed wants only to see his own reflection, which reaches its height when he requests that Bazulto act as a mirror for him in which he “may see the lively portrait of my dying self” (3.13.85). The paradox of life in death expressed here is consistent with Hieronimo’s inability to separate his own identity from that of his murdered son; thus, he experiences a lively form of death due to having his connection with his son severed.

The confusion of his own identity with others in this way is actually counterproductive to the administration of justice in the realm. Justice requires a more objective view of the sufferings of others rather than just the mirroring back of one’s own image in a portrait. Despite Hieronimo’s provision of various objects from his own pockets, those objects are meant only to create a more convincing image of Hieronimo himself. This giving over of personal effects does not lead to justice.

Hieronimo experiences just a few brief moments during the scene with Bazulto in which he acknowledges his separateness from him. One occurs during his speech

comparing his social class to Bazulto's; at that time, he realizes that he and Don Bazulto are separate people, of separate social classes, with separate murdered sons, and he uses Don Bazulto as an impetus to motivate his action toward revenge. His speech comparing their social classes culminates in his tearing of the other citizens' documents as though they were the limbs of his son's murderers. Obviously, this self centered frenzy does not help to foster justice in the realm. That is the key: during most of this scene, Hieronimo lacks pity for Bazulto or for the other citizens seeking justice, whether he realizes his separate identity or not. Without the proper functioning of pity for Bazulto, Hieronimo is incapable of helping him redress his son's murder through the official channels of justice in Spain. And yet Hieronimo's lack of pity is much different from Lorenzo's or the King's because Hieronimo remains a sympathetic character even when he cannot pity others and even as he seeks revenge. Hieronimo is the victim of Lorenzo's and the King's lack of pity. Briefly at the end of 3.13, Hieronimo does finally realize some pity for Bazulto and a sense of separateness, which will be explored momentarily.

The Bazulto scene consists of vacillations between opposites. For instance, Hieronimo vacillates between excessive pity and lack of pity, and between confusing his identity with Bazulto's and seeing himself as a separate person. The scene also offers opposing images of Bazulto: the first is of an isolated Bazulto, and it occurs after Hieronimo tears the other citizens' documents. All but Bazulto then exit the stage, and depending on how long it takes for Hieronimo to return, the audience can be left for some time with an image of an isolated old man whose grievance has been ignored. When Hieronimo does return to the stage, he sees Bazulto as his murdered son or as a Fury, and even after Bazulto makes a straightforward statement about who he is, "I am a grieved

man, and not a ghost, /That came for justice for my murdered son” (3.14.159-60), Hieronimo still confuses “my son” with “thy son” and believes that Bazulto speaks of Horatio.

Hieronimo then returns to that earlier mirror image in which the old man reflects his sorrows. Yet this ending of the scene differs from that earlier moment because there is more equality; earlier, Hieronimo viewed his sorrows in the old man but then elevated himself above him through his social class. He used him as an impetus toward revenge. What Hieronimo neglects to notice, of course, is that Bazulto comes for justice and not for revenge. Or if he notices, it is only that justice and revenge have become one in the same for him (“then shamest thou not, Hieronimo, to neglect/ the sweet revenge of thy Horatio?/ Though on this earth justice will not be found/I’ll down to hell”[105-8]). By the end of the scene, both justice and revenge are forgotten, but there is equality. Two human beings in a similar situation lean on one another for support: “Lean on my arm; I thee, thou me shalt stay” (3.14.171) and go to join a third, Hieronimo’s wife. Hieronimo realizes their similarities, their differences, and that each suffers grief, but rather than having one member stand passively as a portrait, the three will come together in song: “And thou, and I, and she will sing a song,/Three parts in one, but all of discords framed”(3.13.172-3).

Thus, should this ending be seen as Hieronimo having reached the mean in his wavering between excess pity and lack of pity? For the moment, yes, he seems to have been able to extricate his identity from the old man’s long enough to express some pity and to act compassionately toward him. But this pity of Hieronimo’s is enervated. He is mad at this point after all, and whatever pity he feels is rendered impotent by that

madness. And after the breach of justice against his son, his pity no longer leads to just action in the public sphere, which is necessary for the proper functioning of the realm, because he no longer believes that justice can be obtained through the existing institutions on earth. Of course, he is correct about that, and it is not his problem only. It is the problem on a macrocosmic level stretching to the divine.

Hieronimo takes Bazulto into his home – into a private dwelling – to escape the disordered realm and to find what comfort exists there, if any. Public office and official capacities are now stripped, and what is left is just one human pitying another. It is important to note though, that this situation is far from an ideal, because the state needs a justice system, but Hieronimo's private grief and the lack of justice for the ruthless action against him has impaired his ability to serve in that role anymore. While pity directed outward toward fellow citizens is the driving force behind the justice system, Hieronimo has retreated back into himself, as evidenced throughout the scene and by the last line where he interrupts himself to realize "for with a cord Horatio was slain" (3.13.175).

The scene that follows continues the exploration of pity's dysfunction in the realm and of friendship which symbolizes the strategic and tenuous imperial bonds that supplant kinship bonds. Lorenzo inverts the function of pity when he lies about feeling the emotion (3.14.81) for Hieronimo in order to convince his father that he acts justly in preventing Hieronimo from approaching the King, when in fact, he is obstructing justice. This scene also depicts again the entry of two people, the King and the Viceroy, into a private dwelling. Yet when the King calls the Viceroy "friend," it is not the same bare bones exchange as that between Bazulto and Hieronimo in the previous scene because the word "friend" is resonant with the state business of binding Spain and Portugal to one

another. Then, at the end of the scene, Hieronimo hides again under kinship/kin/kindness when Castile directs him, pertaining to Lorenzo, to “embrace each other and be perfect friends” (3.14.195), and he states, “I’ll be friends with you all” (3.14.157). Hieronimo offers particular attention to Balthazar in friendship “Specially with you, my lovely lord” (3.14.158). The Latin at the end of the scene indicates that when just pity is absent, friendship cannot be trusted. Hieronimo offers friendship to Lorenzo and Balthazar only in name in order to plot his revenge. It is false friendship that is later recapitulated in the interior play in the false friendship between Solimon and Erasto.

The beginning of the next scene shows Bel Imperia chastising Hieronimo for all of his feigned friendship and how she perceives that he ignores his primary social bond with his son. When she tells him, “O Unkind Father,” she is telling him that she does not recognize him as kin to Horatio because he “counterfeits” “kindness” to the Spanish and Portuguese leaders. Again, audiences see here that without the assurance that pity toward similar social bonds will lead to just action, kinship boundaries contract so that allegiance to one’s most immediate blood relatives is all that can matter. This is particularly foregrounded in the scene (4.2) in which Isabella stabs herself in the garden. When the justice system functions properly, the King will be moved by pity for Hieronimo, Isabella, and Horatio to bring Horatio’s murderers to justice. When the King fails to feel pity in a manner that leads to just action, then only those who have experienced the closest social bond to the murder victim will be compelled to take action, and their action will be deemed revenge, as it has no state sanction behind it

Aristotle argued that tragedy creates in its audiences a catharsis of pity and terror, and since *the Spanish Tragedy* explores the effect of pity and compassion on justice, it is fitting for it to end with an interior play that finally forces the pity and compassion for Hieronimo's plight that has been absent in the main play. Some literary critics have noticed that the interior play causes the characters in the audience, the King, Castile, and the Viceroy to feel the same shock and grief over loss of kin that Hieronimo himself feels.²⁶ While pity and compassion involve an imaginative experience of someone else's suffering, Hieronimo has forced the issue by making compassion literal. He has created fellow sufferers who can now no longer be oblivious to the nature of his pain. The Spanish King will not initially partake of Hieronimo's suffering at all, so Hieronimo forces him to realize an affinity between themselves and him: "Speak Portuguese whose loss resembles mine; / If thou canst weep upon thy Balthazar, / 'Tis like I wailed for my Horatio" (4.4.114-116). At the same time, he also forces them to realize that a play that they considered to be about foreigners is actually a play about themselves that causes destruction to their own royal families and ends the line of succession. Hieronimo passes through a period of feeling how his own loss resembles Bazulto's before being driven, by the absence of a formal justice system, to revenge. Pity directed outward should culminate in just action; self pity here culminates in revenge.

In the play within, Solimon is the depicted Ottoman emperor. He was known to Europeans as Suleyman the Magnificent. He was also known to the Turks and Europeans as the law-maker, law-giver, or as law-abiding because he made justice the focus of his reign.²⁷ It is doubtful that that is a coincidence in the context of *The Spanish Tragedy* in which Hieronimo is the Knight Marshal of Spain, judging cases himself, and also

experiencing the Spanish king's neglect to help him bring his son's murderers to justice. Conversely, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Solimon represents once more the corruption of justice – an Ottoman sultan obsessed with his own personal love affair with Perseda rather than with public justice and the giving of just laws to society. It is important to note that Solimon's love or lust for Perseda crosses national, cultural, and religious boundaries in a manner analogous to the cross-national and cultural marriage of Bel Imperia and Balthazar.

Geoffrey Whitney's book of emblems offers a Protestant view of Solimon that shows why Kyd might have chosen to depict him in the playlet.

The Lion fierce, and fauage bore contende,
 The one, his pawes: his tufkes the other tries:
 And ere the broile, with bloodie blowes had ende,
 A vulture loe, attendes with watching eies:
 And of their spoile, doth hope to præie his fill,
 And ioyes, when they eche others blood doe spill.

When men of mighte, with deadlie rancor fwell,
 And mortall hate, twitxte mightie Monarches raignes;
 Some gripes doe watche, that like the matter well,
 And of their loffe, doe raise their priuate gaines:
 So, Soliman his Empire did increase,
 When Christian kinges exiled loue, and peace.

Although not literally blood relatives, the Christian kings should be bonded together as brothers through the spilling of Christ's blood, but instead, they are spilling each other's blood. Solimon is ready to take advantage of the situation to expand the boundaries of his empire. While expansion of empire in *The Spanish Tragedy* is predicated on severing the father-son bond and national bonds that have been fused together through compassion for likeness²⁸, expansion of the Ottoman empire in Whitney's emblem is predicated on severing of Christian religious bonds because presumably the Christian kings in question hail from different nations. Regardless of whether the bonds are religious, familial, or national, the emblem and *The Spanish Tragedy* share a common focus on the dangers inherent in the failure to respect these bonds. That they hail from different nations is significant because it demonstrates the Protestant fear of sectarianism leaving Christian nations vulnerable to outside predators. Although it may at first appear to be an example of binding between two Christian kings, Solimon's appearance at the end of *The Spanish Tragedy* demonstrates that Spain's having made its national boundaries permeable to the Portuguese has destroyed it from within. In Whitney's emblem, Solimon capitalizes on the Christian kings' own self destruction. The emblem serves as a message to the Christian kings to maintain religious solidarity against the menace of Islam. Whether in the emblem or in Kyd's play, the growth of an empire demands self destruction as its foundation.

Solimon's depiction in Kyd's play has more facets than it does in Whitney's emblem. By using Solimon in a play about the failings of justice, Kyd exploits Solimon's association with just laws only in order to overturn them. Critics who have written about *The Spanish Tragedy* or about the Ottoman Empire and England assert the correlation

between the Turks and the Spanish in English minds.²⁹ It is not necessarily a specific nation with which the Turks are aligned, but with Catholicism. The alignment with Catholicism has been commonly noticed by critics, but in addition, the Turks are also aligned with revenge and with the severing of familial and kinship bonds in the relentless pursuit of empire.

To discern these additional layers of alignment, it is necessary to look at both levels of the play, the main play and the play within. The Turks appear in the main play at the moment when Hieronimo carries out his revenge through the interior play; Perseda also enacts her revenge in the interior play when she stabs Solimon for his killing of her beloved Erasto. By this act, Bel Imperia simultaneously achieves her own revenge against Balthazar for his part in killing her beloved Horatio in the main play. Andrea has his revenge as well through all of these killings, so there is revenge on all three levels of the play: the interior play, the main play, and the framing scenes in the afterworld. Thus, the Turks appear at the moment of revenge in order to carry out that revenge in the multiple levels in the play. Here then, the Turks are placed in juxtaposition to the workings of a public justice system and offer sudden vengeance instead. Much like the Ottoman sultan was seen as someone who could change temperament and move suddenly into rage and then destruction and killing, the play within moves the main play from marriage celebration into revenge and death. Hieronimo is denied the public institution of a trial but uses another public institution, the theater, to address the wrong done to him. For him, the interior play provides him with a disguise to enact his revenge and with an opportunity to have everyone present at one time to witness what he has done and to experience the same suffering. Visual spectacle is important in *The Spanish Tragedy*, and

Hieronimo obviously wants the visual shock of his audience realizing that what they thought was illusion is reality.

What purpose then does the *Solimon and Perseda* playlet serve for English audiences, given its featuring of both Turkish and Christian characters? Literary critics such as Frank Ardolino argue that rather than feeling compassion for the Spanish and Portuguese deaths, the English audience delighted in the destruction of Spain, of the characters and of their hopes for the future that occurs as a result of the playlet.³⁰ That argument suggests a distancing of the English audiences from both the Spanish characters and the Turkish characters and even from the Christian characters who also appear in the playlet: that seems logical for several reasons. If the interior play was indeed acted in “sundry languages,” then the language difference could have a distancing effect. Even if it was not acted in sundry languages, the Turkish characters and the instruction to use different languages could still work to distance the audience from identifying with the characters in the play.³¹ However, while some aspects of the interior play discourage identification between the English audience and the characters, the effect of Christian characters and the Battle of Rhodes encourages identification. The Knights of Rhodes may have been Catholic, but the English still viewed this battle as one in which Christianity prevailed for some time over the Turkish threat of expanding empire. After their defeat at Rhodes on December 20, 1522, the Knights eventually resettled on the island of Malta, so the English would have seen them as a continuing challenge to the Islamic world, even after their defeat at Rhodes.³² Although he was depicted as merciless in English plays, Suleyman historically extended mercy to the Knights of Rhodes by “offering ... an honourable evacuation” of the island.”³³ Additionally, Suleyman’s

conquest of Rhodes was not, according to historians, about expanding the Ottoman Empire. Instead, it was about protecting Ottoman ships and their routes from attack by the Knights.³⁴ The early modern playwrights, however, used the Turkish characters for narrative purposes that differed from history.

The disguises of the Ottoman Sultan, the Bashaw, and the Italian Catholic characters in the aftermath of the Battle of Rhodes become the means by which Hieronimo and Bel Imperia in the main play are able to culminate their revenge. Although the Turkish characters appear at the point at which the revenge is brought to fruition, both in the main play and the interior play, they are not the avengers. They instead initiate the killing that brings about the desire for revenge. While it could be argued that the Catholics, whether Italian or Spanish, are being equated with the Muslims due to their ruthlessness, I would argue that a qualitative difference exists between the Catholic characters in the play within and the Muslim characters. First, there is the fact that the Solimon and Perseda legend was part of the medieval romance tradition, and Perseda, in that tradition was construed as the fair Christian maiden. Second, Hieronimo praises the character of Perseda in the main text of *The Spanish Tragedy*. She is “an Italian dame, whose beauty ravished all that her beheld” (4.1.111-112) and she is “chaste and resolute” (4.1. 140); additionally, she should be attired “like Phoebe, Flora, or the Huntress,” all laudatory phrases. The Huntress in particular was Diana, associated with Queen Elizabeth. Perseda is much more generically Christian than specifically Catholic. Thus, the English audience would find themselves identifying with the Christian characters of Erasto and Perseda. In that sense, they would not be able to disassociate themselves from the impulse to revenge or to believe that it is the purview of the Turks or

the Catholics and not of themselves as Christians. The Turks do not so much represent revenge and enact revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy* as they provide a plausible and convenient narrative in which to insert revenge for wrongs done and for blood bonds broken in the interests of expanding an empire. While the Whitney emblem portrays the Christians destroying their own bonds, *Solimon and Perseda* portrays the Ottoman sultan destroying the bond between the Christian man and woman. That destruction ignites revenge and suicide within both the interior play and the main play and in turn eradicates the head of the Ottoman Empire, Solimon, as well as spilling out into the main play to annihilate the Spanish empire.

The Whitney emblem, associates Solimon/Suleyman with Christians' self destruction. Another, perhaps even more important story told about Suleyman at this time, likewise associates him with self destruction. This is the story of the slaying of his son, Mustapha. It is told in Fulke Greville's *Mustapha*. Samuel Purchas, the Protestant commentator, also tells the story in *Purchas his Pilgrims*:

thus was *Solyman* victorious and unhappy, when he was forced to darreine battell against his owne bowels, and hauing murvhered *Mustapha* his eldest sonne (the hopefulest branch in Turkish estimation, that euer grew out of the *Ottoman* stocke) hee warred against *Baiazet*, another one of his sonnes; whom, with foure of his children, he procured to be done to death in *Perſia*. And after much domesticall trouble, in his eleventh Expedition into Hungarie (his Fleet in the siege of Malta, being before, with great disgrace repulſed) he dyed at the ſiege of Zigeſ, the fourth of *September* 1566.³⁵

In addition to directly killing Mustapha, he also was indirectly responsible for other relatives' deaths as this passage demonstrates, although the murder of Mustafa was retold most often.³⁶ Christine Woodhead also relates the events surrounding Suleyman's execution of Mustafa in 1553 and his later instigation of the murder of his other son, Bayezid, along with Bayezid's four grandsons. She writes that regarding Mustafa "Süleyman proved unable to deal with rumours of impending treachery except by the sudden panic measure of his son's execution, in October 1553."³⁷ It is important to note that Solimon, who killed his son to maintain control of his empire, is being used in the resolution of *The Spanish Tragedy*, which is a play about the killing of Hieronimo's son in order to expand an empire. Granted, the specific circumstances are different in each case. For instance, Suleyman was maintaining his position as sultan rather than actively expanding territory. Succession to the sultanate in the Ottoman Empire was not hereditary as it was for monarchs in England and Spain, so feuds in which fathers killed sons, sons fathers, and brothers killed one another were common after the death of a sultan in order to determine who would take his place. The man who won was considered God's choice as sultan. While Mustapha's killing came about through fighting within a family, Horatio's came about in the aftermath of fighting between nations. It came at a time when peace was meant to be negotiated, and bonds were meant to be forged between the nations, previously foreign, to make them not foreign, to transform them into friends and later family. Both killings are underhanded. And at the foundation is the association of the Turk with civil disorder – with the confounding of kin and kind, despite the different contexts. Also at the foundation of the killing of either Mustapha or of Horatio

is a desire to control who possesses the power to rule an empire and to control the line of succession.

The English audience would indeed identify with Erasto and Perseda in the interior play. While the Turks appear in the narrative of the main play at the moment of revenge, so do Erasto and Perseda. What is more striking is that Perseda, a Christian woman, enacts the revenge on the Ottoman sultan by stabbing him. In other plays, the Ottoman sultan kills a family member or the beloved Christian woman, so *The Spanish Tragedy*, being first in a line of plays, initiates a pattern in which the Ottoman sultan is killed. Later, that pattern changes, and the sultan does the killing. In the main play, Bel Imperia has her revenge on Balthazar by stabbing him, so it is both in the main play and in the interior play that revenge killing is done by a woman. The Turks symbolize the betrayal that breeds revenge. That the leading female character, in either the main or interior play, can be moved to kill in revenge highlights the severity of the betrayal. It also highlights the fear of miscegenation³⁸, which explains Bel Imperia's and Balthazar's cryptic discussion of fear earlier in the play. Perseda's killing of Solimon prevents her from being raped and prevents any mixed offspring that might result. Bel Imperia's killing of Balthazar, and then of course, her suicide prevents miscegenation as well in the main play.

What the Turk then represents in the main play is the way that cross cultural ties forged in empire cannot be trusted and cannot last. This is evident in the culmination of the "friendship" trope into false friendship. Friendship becomes corrupt across cultural lines, and romantic love across cultures in this play spawns murder, as Solimon's "love" for Perseda quickly comes to murder.

The word “friendship” though is reserved in the interior play to describe the connection that Solimon believes he has with Erasto: “Erasto is my friend.” After Solimon has conquered Rhodes, he characterizes his bond with the conquered as friendship. He then demonstrates again that the fear that Bel Imperia and Balthazar felt in one another’s presence earlier in the play is justified. His friendship with Erasto is proven false when he has him killed. Bonds across cultures are then laced with betrayal. Perseda declares the Bashaw who stabbed Erasto “pitiless” and by extension Solimon as well. Power cannot compel bonds between the emperor and the subject: “Yet by thy power thou thinkest to command,/ And to thy power Perseda doth obey; / But were she able, thus she would revenge” (4.4.63-4). Just because power shifts into the hands of a new ruler, obedience, pity, friendship, and love do not automatically follow between the ruler and the ruled. Unlike the Solimon of Whitney’s emblem, the Solimon of the interior play tries to force social bonds between himself and the new subjects in his empire, but when he kills his friend Erasto, he exposes how tenuous those bonds are. The Solimon of Whitney’s emblem is much more passive. However, the Ottoman sultan Solimon fits handily into the resolution of *The Spanish Tragedy* because of other narratives about him, namely his association for the English both with justice, yet paradoxically with the injustice of killing his son. When Lorenzo kills the beloved son of Hieronimo and the son of Spain who fought valiantly against the Portuguese in war to make way for a beautiful empire, *The Spanish Tragedy* seeks a similar objective as the historical Solimon did. The last line of the main play of *The Spanish Tragedy* shows that the friendship between Spain and Portugal was also false and that “Spain hath no refuge for a Portingale” (4.5.218).

The Spanish Tragedy ends with a final emphasis on friendship when Andrea in the framing scene decides the different fates of his friends and foes. The end does not resolve the issues of justice, pity, and revenge. Revenge and justice are combined in a troubling way when Andrea mentions “just and sharp revenge” (4.5.16), and how Isabella will be consigned to feel “pity” that “weeps but never feeleth pain” (4.5.20). Without pain, pity may be stripped of its agency because the experience of pain may be required to spur just action on the part of others, action that will be an attempt to alleviate the pain as much as possible. As a result, it may be that Isabella will feel pity in name only and because it sounds appropriate to her feminine gender role to weep for others.

The main debate among literary critics about *The Spanish Tragedy* relates to whether or not the Elizabethan audiences would find that Hieronimo’s revenge was justified.³⁹ The play seems much more nuanced than that debate would allow. Rather than coming down on one side or the other, it explores political conditions and emotional responses that lead to revenge and how some of those will inevitably propel an individual, even one who represents and maintains the justice system, outside the formal channels. The play’s exploration characterizes the pursuit of empire as steeped in the blood of wars abroad followed by the blood of kin killing at home, the breakdown of the justice system, false and superficial friendship, and finally revenge killings. The Ottoman sultan, in the microcosm of the interior play, emphasizes to the English that cross cultural alliances and attempts to build an empire bring disastrous results; they cause a nation to resemble “Turks and infidels” who “kin with kin, kind with kind confound” leaving a legacy of grief and banishing peace for “child [and] child’s children” and “the whole succeeding hope” throughout the generations to come.

¹William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second* in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare, Updated Fourth Edition*, ed. David Bevington (New York: Longman, 1997), 725-62).

²For a further discussion of friendship in the play, see Sacvan Bercovitch, "Love and Strife in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 9 (1969): 215-229.

³When I discuss the Ottoman sultan as a historical figure, I use the Arabic spelling Suleyman. When I discuss the Ottoman sultan as a character in *The Spanish Tragedy*, I retain the spelling used by Kyd: "Solimon." When I quote directly from the texts of twentieth and twenty-first century historians such as Halil Inalcik or Christine Woodhead, I retain the spellings that they used. In those cases, Suleyman may be spelled as Süleyman.

⁴Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 8-73. All further references to the play will be to this edition.

⁵For a discussion of spectacle in the play, see Molly Smith, "The Theater and the Scaffold: Death as Spectacle in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 32 (1992): 217-32.

⁶Roslyn Lander Donald, "Formulas and Their Imitations: *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*. *Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association*. 4.2 (1978): 13. Jordi Coral Escolà, "Vengeance Is Yours: Reclaiming the Social Bond in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus* of Periodicals" *Atlantis* 29.2 (December 2007): 60. And for a further discussion of the foundational role both *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Tamburlaine*

had in portraying important social bonds, see Thomas McAlindon, “*Tamburlaine the Great and The Spanish Tragedy: the Genesis of a Tradition*,” *Huntington Library Quarterly: Studies in English and American History and Literature*, 45 (1982): 59-81.

⁷Some other revenge tragedies (or tragedies with prominent revenge elements) that feature Muslim characters or Islamic settings are Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*, Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*, Thomas Dekker’s *Lust’s Dominion*, Robert Green’s *Selimus*, John Mason’s *The Turke*, Thomas Goffe’s *The Courageous Turk* and *The Raging Turke*, George Peele’s *The Battle of Alcazar*. Jonathan Burton has commented on the significance of the use of Jewish characters and Muslim characters simultaneously in “Turk plays” in “‘It dus me good, dat me have coosened the Jew’: Christians, Turks, and Jews on the Early Modern Stage,” *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2005), 196-232. I would argue that the English are using the religious differences, be they Muslim or Jewish, to explore their own issues of mercy and justice. Either Muslims or Jews can take center stage in these explorations. For example, *The Merchant of Venice* explores justice and mercy through its revenge motif, but it makes the Jew the center of that exploration in comparison to Christians. However, *The Merchant of Venice* does still use the Turk in the key court room scene in Act 4 when the Duke exhorts Shylock to have mercy indicating that even a Turk or Tartar would be merciful. Thus, mercy would issue, even “From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,/ From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train’d / To offices of tender courtesy” (4.1.31).

⁸I take up this formula in Chapter 3 when I explore the later and less popular plays, Philip Massinger’s *The Renegado*, Robert Greene’s *Selimus*, Thomas Goffe’s *The Courageous*

Turk, and *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*. Later in Chapter 4, I discuss Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, which has a scene that parodies Pedrigano's execution.

⁹ For a discussion of the influence of Seneca and Virgil on *The Spanish Tragedy*, see Eugene D. Hill, "Senecan and Virgilian Perspectives in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *English Literary Renaissance* 15 (1985): 143-165.

¹⁰ Gordon Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ., Press, 1985), 8.

¹¹ In this sense, I agree with Eric Griffin who recognizes that in *The Spanish Tragedy*'s use of *The Aeneid*, the play is arguing against empire building; he contends that it dramatizes England's Protestant view that the Spanish and Catholic imperial ethos is evil and promiscuous. The play illustrates that England should follow its own national ethos instead. I find that many of the dramas depicting Islam make the same argument against empire. Eric Griffin, "Ethos, Empire, and the Valiant Acts of Thomas Kyd's Tragedy of the Spains" *English Literary Renaissance* 31.2 (2001): 192-229.

¹² For a discussion of the symbolic significance of Isabella's taking out her revenge on the garden, see Donald R. Wineke, "Hieronimo's Garden and the Fall of Babylone: Culture and Anarchy in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Aeolian Harps: Essays in Literature in Honor of Maurice Browning Cramer*, ed. Donna C. Fricke and Douglas C. Fricke (Michigan: Bowling Green University Press, 1976), 65-79.

¹³ "Fortune is blinde and sees not my deserts,
So is she deafe and heares not my laments:
And could she heare, yet is she wilfull mad,

And therefore will not pittie my distresse.

Suppose that she could pittie me, what then?

What helpe can be expected at her hands?

Whose foot standing on a rowling stone,

And minde more mutable then fickle windes. (1.3.23-27).

“Where pittie weepes but neuer feeleth paine” (4.5.20);

“Woe to thy birth, thy body and thy soule,

Thy cursed father, and thy conquerd selfe:

And band with bitter execrations be

The day and place where he did pittie thee” (3.7.61-66)

“But let me looke on my *Horatio* :

Sweet boy how art thou chang'd in deaths black shade?

Had *Proserpine* no pittie on thy youth?

But suffered thy fair crimson colourd spring,

With withered winter to be blasted thus?” (3.14.147-149)

“Your selfe my L. hath seene his passions,

That ill beseemde the presence of a King,

And for I pittied him in his distresse,

I helde him thence with kinde and curteous words,

As free from malice to *Hieronimo* ,

As to my soule my Lord" (3.14.79-84)

"Since neither pietie nor pittie moues

The King to iustice or compassion:

I will reuenge my selfe vpon this place" (4.2.2-3). This last one contains both the words "pittie" and "compassion." This is the one instance of the word "compassion" in the play.

¹⁴ The OED shows two senses of "piety": "senses relating to the quality of feeling or showing pity," (OED, 2d edn., s.v., "piety," I,1) which are "pity," "mercy," or "compassion" and "senses relating to devotion" OED, 2d edn., s.v. "piety," II, 2.

¹⁵ In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, pity is defined as "the disposition to mercy or compassion; clemency, mercy, mildness, tenderness," so the first major definition incorporates the meaning of "compassion," OED, 2d edn., s.v., "pity," I, 1. Another definition of "pity," now obsolete, is "piety," OED, 2d edn., s.v., "pity," II,II. The OED definition of "compassion" as a verb is "to pity," and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Act 4, Scene 1 line 123 is used as an example, 2d edn., s.v. "compassion."

¹⁶ It has been often discussed that the depiction of Muslim characters in early modern dramas is unstable, and therefore that characters can be either deplorable or admirable. I agree, and by stating that the Muslim character is set up as all that the English would not want to be, I confine my remark to the instances in which the Muslim character is shown to be incapable of feeling pity and extending mercy.

¹⁷ OED, 2d edn., s.v., "compassion," 1-2.

¹⁸ The connection between compassion and helping action is borrowed from Martha C.

Nussbaum who states,

Compassion makes thought attend to certain human facts, and in a certain way, with concern to make the lot of the suffering person as good, other things being equal, as it can be – because that person is an object of one’s concern. Often that concern is motivated or supported by the thought that one might oneself be, one day, in that person’s position. Often, again, it is motivated or supported by the imaginative exercise of putting oneself in that person’s place. I have claimed that, other things being equal, the compassionate person will acquire motivations to help the person for whom she has compassion. (Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001], 342.

¹⁹ Both Martha Nussbaum’s book and the OED support this definition of compassion, which I am borrowing.

²⁰ This connection between the emotion compassion and the emotions of anger and revenge is also borrowed from Martha C. Nussbaum’s analysis of the Stoic and other classic oppositions to the emotion as a guide to ethical action:

Finally, the classic attack examines the connection between compassion and the roots of other more objectionable emotions. The person who feels compassion accepts certain controversial evaluative judgments concerning the place of “external goods” in human flourishing. She accepts the idea that tragic predicaments can strike people through no fault of their own, and that the losses people suffer thus matter deeply. But a person who accepts those judgments

accepts that children, spouse, citizenship, and other externals all really matter for human flourishing. This means that she allows her own good to rest in the hands of fortune. And to admit one's own vulnerability to fortune is to have all the raw material not only for compassion, but also for fear, anxiety, and grief; and not only for these, but for anger and the retributive disposition as well. What Stoic analyses bring out again and again is that the repudiation of compassion is not in the least connected with callousness, brutality, or the behavior of the boot-in-the-face tyrant. In fact, in this picture it is compassion itself that is closely connected with cruelty. The person who has compassion for another acknowledges the importance of certain worldly goods and persons, which can in principle be damaged by another's agency. The response to such damages will be compassion if the damaged person is someone else; but if the damaged person is oneself, and the damage is deliberate, the response will be anger – and anger that will be proportional to the intensity of the evaluative attachment. (Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001], (362).

²¹The Oxford English dictionary contains several definitions in which “remorse” invokes “pity.” One obsolete definition, which cites Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, is simply “sorrow, pity, or compassion” OED, 2d edn., s.v., “remorse,” 5. *The Faerie Queene* and *The Spanish Tragedy* are contemporaneous. Additionally, the Norton Anthology of Renaissance Drama glosses “remorse” as “pity.”

²²“For the Senecan extreme, in which one acts only to lose oneself, has been familiar to Hieronimo from the moment he discovers his son’s corpse. At that moment he knows that

his son's death is the figure of his own death. Henceforth, his "life" will consist of giving form to that recognition, so that the experience of self-loss, figuratively discovered in the death of Horatio, will enter upon the world of fact and time as an action. The action is revenge, revenge is the realization of self-loss, and self-loss thus takes the form of an intention carried through to its completion in time. These ideas are suggested in the Latin dirge which Hieronimo speaks over the corpse of his son. The dirge is based on a Renaissance commonplace – that the death of a friend, for example, seems to be the death of oneself – but for Hieronimo this feeling of self-loss is more than a momentary grief. He vows to keep himself alive only to revenge Horatio's death . . . but Horatio's death is, figuratively and immediately his own. His heart is dead, his life is his dead son . . . Hieronimo's life, in other words, is a "lively form of death" (III.ii.2), from the discovery of his son's corpse through to the accomplishing of revenge" (Scott McMillin, "The Book of Seneca in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 14.2 [Spring 1974]: 206). For McMillin's analysis of the loss of a son and the failure of language, see "The Figure of Silence in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *ELH* 39 (1972): 27-48.

²³McMillin, "Seneca," 206.

²⁴This line also resembles the line in *Selimus*, which I discuss in Chapter 3, when the father Bajazet likens his son *Selimus* to a "strange unacquainted foreigner." Building an empire converts family members into foreigners and enemies.

²⁵The OED defines the obsolete word "kindship" as "kindness" (2d edn., s.v., "kindship," 1). Then in turn, the OED defines "kindness" in its first definition as "kinship; near relationship; natural affection arising from this" (2d edn., s.v., "kindness," 1).

²⁶Jordi Coral Escolà. "Vengeance is Yours: Reclaiming the Social Bond in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*" *Atlantis: Revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Ingleses y Norteamericanos* 29.2 (2007 Dec): 59-74; Christopher Crosbie, "Oeconomia and the Vegetative Soul: Rethinking Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *English Literary Renaissance* 38.1 (2008 Winter): 3-33.

²⁷ See Metin Kunt, "State and Sultan up to the Age of Süleyman: Frontier Principality to World Empire," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 27-8, and V.J. Parry et al., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730: Chapters from the Cambridge History of Islam and the New Cambridge Modern History*, ed. M.A. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 102.

²⁸ Although "likeness" and "similarity" are synonymous, I chose the word "likeness" here because it also denotes a portrait, and Hieronimo sees the likeness or portrait of himself in Bazulto.

²⁹J.R. Mulryne states that

Simon Shepherd has noticed how a brief fashion for plays on Turks developed in the 1580s and 1590s, and furthermore how Protestant propaganda was inclined to "describe the alleged cruelty of Catholics in general and Spaniards in particular as Turkish", a point Richard Bauckham amplifies by quoting Protestant apologists to the effect that 'the turke and antichrist differ not but as the devil differeth from hell'. . . Yet the relevance of anti-Turkish prejudice to *The Spanish Tragedy*, and of the association of Turkish anti-Christianity with the perceived anti-Christianity

of Spain, is I believe real – at least as a prevailing habit-of-mind within which

Kyd's audience might interpret the *Solimon and Perseda* playlet (93-4).

J.R. Mulryne, "Nationality and Language in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*," in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, ed. Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michèle (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 87-105. See also Johnathan Burton, pp. 25-27; Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Hampshire, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 50-1; Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998); Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

³⁰Frank Ardolino, *Apocalypse and Armada in Kyd's Spanish Tragedy*, in *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies*, (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1995). See also Ardolino's "Corrida of Blood in *The Spanish Tragedy: Kyd's Use of Revenge as National Destiny*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 1 (1984): 37-39, "Hieronimo Agonistes: Kyd's Use of Hieronimo as Sanctified Revenger in *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*, 15 (1994): 161-65, and "Now Shall I See the Fall of Babylon: *The Spanish Tragedy* as Reformation Play of Daniel," *Renaissance and Reformation*, 26 (1990): 49-54.

³¹For discussion of verbal language in *The Spanish Tragedy*, see Carla Mazzio, "Staging the Vernacular: Language and Nation in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 38 (1998): 207-232. For written language see David Cutts, "Writing and Revenge: The Struggle for Authority in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish*

Tragedy," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 22 (1996): 147-59. For an examination of the interplay between language and social class, see Robert Barrie, "'Unknown Languages' and Subversive Play in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 21 (1995): 63-80. And for an analysis of how the breakdown of language in the play symbolizes the breakdown of society, see Carol McGinnis Kay, "Deception through Words: A Reading of *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Studies in Philology* 74 (1977): 20-38.

³²Metin Kunt, "Introduction: Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Policies and Problems," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 44.

³³Kunt, "Introduction: Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Policies and Problems," 42.

³⁴Kunt, "Introduction: Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Policies and Problems," 42.

³⁵Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Featherstone, 1613), 285. Worldcat (OCLC:606546752).

³⁶McJannet, "Horrible Acts and Wicked Offenses: Suleiman and Mustapha in Narrative and Drama," in *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 141-168.

³⁷Christine Woodhead, "Perspectives on Süleyman," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 178-9.

³⁸Ania Loomba, "Periodization, Race, and Global Contact," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37.3 (2007): 595-620.

³⁹ Fredson Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642*, (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1941); Ronald Broude, "Revenge and Revenge Tragedy in Renaissance England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 28 (1975): 38-58; Lily B. Campbell, "Theories of Revenge in Renaissance England," *Modern Philology* 38 (1931): 281-96. See also, Geoffrey Aggeler, "The Eschatological Crux in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 86 (1987): 319-331; Ernst De Chickera, "Divine Justice and Private Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Modern Language Review* 57 (1962): 228-32; M.H. Levin. " 'Vindicta mihi': Meaning, Morality, and Motivation in *The Spanish Tragedy*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 4 (1964): 307-24; Charles A. Hallett. *The Revenger's Madness*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980). Philip Edwards, "Thrusting Elysium into Hell: The Originality of *The Spanish Tragedy*," *The Elizabethan Theatre*, Vol. 11, ed. A.L. Magnusson and C.E. McGee. (Port Credit: P.D. Meany, 1990), 117-132. Jonas A. Barish, "The Spanish Tragedy, or The Pleasures and Perils of Rhetoric," *Elizabethan Theatre*, Statford-Upon-Avon Studies, Vol. 9, Ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), 59-85.

“Let Not Your Sorrows Die though I am Dead”: The Anti Imperial Function of the
Moor in *Titus Andronicus*

Introduction

Titus Andronicus begins with a failure of pity that reverberates throughout the entire play, leading ultimately to the self destruction of the Roman Empire. As it traverses its path toward self destruction, it makes an argument against empire, like *The Spanish Tragedy*, by demonstrating that an empire necessitates the self sacrifice of kin killing; killing of kin in turn makes it impossible to meld together heterogeneous cultures as an empire requires. The play culminates as Rome has “do[ne] shameful execution on herself,” and it shows, through its ending emphasis on the denial of pity to Tamora and to Aaron, that “this scattered corn/these broken limbs” cannot be “knit again into one mutual sheaf” (5.3.75; 70). By the end of the play, pity for Aaron results in execution. Additionally, the play is bookended by the withholding of pity to Tamora, as both the opening scene and the last line of the play declare that she falls beyond the realm of pity.

Shakespeare makes this argument against empire in a slightly different manner than Kyd. While *The Spanish Tragedy* opposes any hint that pity should cross cultural lines in the formation of empire, *Titus Andronicus* demands that pity be felt across cultural lines at key points, yet the play insists at every turn that this movement of emotion is simply not possible, even though the very survival of the empire mandates it. The insistence upon this particular flow of emotion results from the fact that in an empire, human beings from diverse cultures must learn how to coexist, despite differences, if the empire is to continue. The movement of certain emotions such as pity across cultural lines would facilitate coexistence for the Romans and Goths, yet these emotions are

absent toward one another. *Titus* further demonstrates that the pursuit of empire obliterates the capacity to perceive elements of sameness – of common humanity – between one individual and another.

The inability to feel pity and bonds of sameness across cultural lines is the initial failure that sets the Roman Empire on the path to self destruction because it begins the revenge cycle. The play also reveals from the beginning that the moral code of empire demands a literal self sacrifice: one's family must perish when it is expedient for the expansion or maintenance of the political structure of the Roman Empire.¹ The failure of pity across cultures, coupled with the inability of any of the characters – Titus, the other Andronici, Tamora, Saturninus, and Aaron – to meet the unrealistic imperial demands of self sacrifice cements the Roman Empire's destruction. Each character, in his or her own way, prioritizes family allegiance above the preservation of the Roman Empire. Each character contracts back into the family unit. Aaron the Moor represents an extreme version of one who is both averse to self sacrifice and committed to destroying the Roman Empire. In being averse to self sacrifice, Aaron allies with his family, namely his son.

Exploiting the early modern era's imagined connection between Muslims and the killing of kin, yet ironically reversing it, the Moor functions in *Titus Andronicus* to confirm the Romans' self destructive tendencies brought about by empire. He does so because he is the only character who honors bonds of sameness by preserving the life of his child, and his singular action accentuates Titus's kin killing because audiences would see Aaron's loyalty to a child as uncharacteristic of a character of his ilk. As a dark skinned Moorish character, Aaron conforms to the stock villain character of the early

modern stage, and since he is a Moor, audiences would readily associate him with Islam, even though he states that he eschews all religion and “believest no god” (5.1.71).

Associated with Islam, Aaron is also associated with everything that is evil, yet remarkably, not this one evil act: the extermination of his son. And it would be logical for him to kill his son since not doing so jeopardizes his relationship with the emperor’s wife and thereby his power within the Roman Empire.

Aaron’s particular brand of evil doing is anti imperial. That is, it is uniquely suited to destroying an empire because it strives to keep a family’s sorrows alive for as long as possible, pushing the family together into shared suffering, a commitment to vengeance, and away from self sacrifice for the empire. Collectively, all of the characters in *Titus* create the argument against empire, and Aaron’s contribution is one piece of it. Despite being evil and capable of inflicting atrocities directly or indirectly, he demonstrates the necessary limits of self sacrifice for power and honor within the Roman Empire by refusing to kill his child.

II

Unlike *The Spanish Tragedy*, the character associated with Islam in *Titus Andronicus* is a Moor and not a Turk; yet although both plays begin with different types of Muslim characters, both follow the same trajectory and end in the same place: with a monumental failure of pity that leads to revenge and the destruction of an empire. How then can plays with such a significant difference, among myriad other differences, lead to the same outcome?

Imitation is one obvious answer. The playwrights imitated what was successful in the past. Since *The Spanish Tragedy* was a popular revenge tragedy featuring a Turk, it

stands to reason that Muslim characters would appear in other revenge tragedies, which is the case with *Titus Andronicus*. That the character in *Titus* is a Moor and not a Turk may not necessarily arise from any specific cultural encounter between the Moors and Europe or any specific history related to Moors in the Roman Empire. After all, critics have tried in vain to find a clear cut historical source for *Titus Andronicus* but have instead uncovered only possibilities and have concluded that the play is influenced by a variety of classical sources, both historical and literary.² Roman history does illustrate that the Roman Empire was ruled at times by African rulers and that the early moderns would have had acquaintance with texts that recounted those times.³ It may be that knowledge of these African rulers led Shakespeare to place Aaron the Moor within the Roman Empire of the play. However, Shakespeare's imitation of *The Spanish Tragedy*'s inclusion of a Turk is more probable. *Titus Andronicus* is a widely acknowledged imitation of *the Spanish Tragedy* and as such, it repeats basic elements of previous plays but varies them to an extent for entertainment purposes. An interest in colonialism in early modern scholarship has resulted in contextualization of the plays that feature Turks and Moors within the Mediterranean and within cultural encounters between England and/or Europe and Ottoman or Moorish people. Cultural encounters are an obvious reason why some early modern dramas depicted Islamic themes and settings and Muslim characters. So too is imitation.

In *Titus Andronicus*, the Spanish empire and the war between Spain and Portugal become the Roman Empire and the war between the Goths and Romans. The marriage of Bel Imperia and Balthazar becomes the marriage of Tamora and Saturninus. The Turk who appears in the playlet becomes the Moor who steps out on to the main stage of the

play. The Turk, Solimon, who was well known for both a formal political commitment to administering justice in the Ottoman empire and for the slaughter of his own son for the expediency of the empire becomes the Moor who values the personal – his son – more than he does the Roman Empire. The Moor in *Titus* functions in the same manner as the Turk in *The Spanish Tragedy* by accentuating the connection between an empire and kin killing.

Despite the differences between Moors and Turks during this time period, early modern playwrights often conflated the people from different Islamic regions into a character with standard traits that suggested Islam or that suggested a Turk. For instance, in John Fletcher's *The Island Princess* (1621), the setting of the East Indies/Spice Islands indicates that the native islanders are Muslim because the Spice Islands historically had a Muslim population, which originated as a result of trading along the island coasts. Even so, the description of the traits of these native islanders sounds vaguely pagan, vaguely Catholic, and vaguely Muslim. Princess Quisara, the main island character, is said to worship the sun and moon. It is possible that Fletcher was alluding to the half moons that early modern playwrights associated with the Turks and Islam. While early modern writers, either playwrights or historians, could associate Islam with some positive, even Protestant values, when viewing it negatively, they often associated it with Catholicism.⁴ As Jonathan Burton notes, being Muslim and being a Turk were many times considered to be the same.⁵

Given the conflation between Muslims in general and Turks, it is logical that Shakespeare might choose to substitute a Moor for a Turk in *Titus* yet maintain the Turk's connection to kin killing that Kyd used in *The Spanish Tragedy*. I am not

suggesting that Shakespeare saw no differences at all between Turks and Moors. I am also not suggesting that the history that I related in Chapter 1 about the Ottoman sultan Suleiman can be superimposed on to Aaron the Moor. Nonetheless, fictional Turks and Moors were at times interchangeable and could take on some of the same symbolic meanings. In *Titus*, Aaron the Moor can take on these meanings because as a Moor, he is associated with Islam.

I would argue that *Titus* be considered as an Islamic play. In *Traffic and Turning*, Jonathan Burton compiles a “Chronological List of Dramatic Works with Islamic Characters, Themes, or Settings, which includes Kyd’s *Solimon and Perseda* but neither *The Spanish Tragedy* nor *Titus Andronicus*.”⁶ I am not the only one who includes *The Spanish Tragedy*.⁷ However, the same cannot be said of *Titus Andronicus*. I believe that it should be included. As an imitation of *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Titus* shares early modern England’s vision of Islam and Islamic empires as steeped in kin killing, and it manipulates that vision to critique the would-be English empire. *Titus* makes clear that Roman religion demands revenge, and it also makes clear that the Moor does not subscribe to the tenets of any religion. Regardless, he cannot be separated from Islam in the minds of English audiences because he is a Moor.

III

Early modern playwrights and audiences did not consider the Ottoman Empire to be the only empire built on a foundation of kin killing. Classical histories of the Roman Empire are rife with kin killing. Roman histories by Livy, Plutarch, or Herodian relate

stories of family members who slay one another due to desire to rule an empire. For instance, Herodian's *History of the Roman Empire* relates the story of the brothers, Caracalla and Geta, who feud over control of the empire after their father Severus passes away.⁸ Their feuding impairs their ability to act justly because "if they sat as judges, they handed down dissenting opinions often to the ruin of those on trial; for rivalry counted more than justice to these two" (114). The brothers make many attempts to kill one another through poisoning, and after Caracalla finally kills Geta in his mother's arms, he gives an impassioned speech about kin killing, which attempts to transform a crime against the family into self defense and a just political strategy.

Caracalla mounted the imperial throne and addressed the senators as follows: "I am not unaware that every murder of a kinsman, immediately the deed is known, is despised, and that the name 'kinsman-killer' arouses harsh censure as soon as it falls upon the ear. Pity follows for the victims, hatred for the victors. In such cases it appears the victim is abused, the victor abusing. But if one were to consider the deed with sober judgment and not with sympathy for the fallen, and if he were to evaluate the victor's motive and intent, he would find that sometimes it is both reasonable and necessary for the man about to suffer an injury to defend himself and not stand passively and submit ... First of all, you must give thanks to the gods for having preserved at least one of your emperors for you; then you must lay aside your differences of opinion in thought and in attitude and lead your lives in security, looking to one emperor alone. (116-7)

Herodian's recounting of two conniving brothers who can never be reconciled casts neither brother in a positive light, but especially not Caracalla. During the speech,

Caracalla attempts to rewrite the narrative of what it means to kill one's brother when control over an empire is at stake. Through his argument of self defense, he contends that pity for his brother is not warranted and that the empire, which includes the loyal followers of his brother, should resolidify around him. At the end of his speech, Caracalla storms from the room, which undercuts his image as a prudent man.

The early modern period also sometimes connected the Moors to kin killing and deadly dynastic disputes. For instance, Othello kills his wife, Desdemona, and while George Peele altered some of the actual events of the Battle of Alcazar, early modern audiences were still interested in this narrative of Muly Mahamet usurping the throne from his uncle Abdelmelec. Peele's play opens with a dumb show, which portrays the murder of Muly Mahamet's uncle Abdelmunen and Muly Mahamet's younger brothers. The murderers were sent by Muly Mahamet himself.⁹

In comparison to the slaughter of family by Othello, Muly Mahamet, or by Caracalla, Spenser writes allegorically about Queen Elizabeth ordering the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in a manner that reflects well on the queen. Mercilla, (who represents Queen Elizabeth) feels "piteous ruth" over Duessa's (who represents Mary) "wretched plight" and when she is asked for a judgment, she delays it in order to express the emotion that she is feeling, shedding tears but at the same time, attempting to discreetly hide her "passion" (V.ix. 50; 2; 9). Later, when Mercilla sentences Duessa to death, she is praised for her "mercy," even as she orders Duessa's execution:

Much more it [mercy] praysed was of those two knights;
 The noble Prince, and righteous *Artegall*,
 When they had seene and heard her doome a rights

Against *Duessa*, damned by them all;
 But by her tempred without griefe or gall,
 Till strong constraint did her thereto enforce,
 And yet euen then ruing her wilfull fall,
 With more than needful naturall remorse,
 And yielding the last honour to her wretched corse. (V.x.4)

Naturally, several characteristics separate Spenser's representation of Mercilla from the familial killing presented in the dramas that depict Islam, but the one of interest here is the depiction of Mercilla/Elizabeth as merciful, despite ordering the execution. Others, along with the Turk and Moor, were viewed as family killers, but among those, some were marked as different because the killing was merciful. This is the case with Mercilla. Her emotions communicate to others that she sentences her cousin to death reluctantly. The particular emotions that she experiences are "ruth" or pity toward her cousin and "remorse" over what is about to transpire. In Chapter 3, I discuss how the Roman Emperor Lucius Junius Brutus historically presided over the execution of his two sons, as related by the historian Livy. This familial killing is positioned as just in Livy's narrative, while in Herodian's narrative, it is clear that Caracalla's killing of Geta is not just. The emotions that Brutus publicly displays, which are described simply as "the natural feelings of a father" foster this sense that the execution is just because while he is able as an emperor to prioritize the stability of the empire above his family, he has not forsaken his emotional bond with his sons. There is a sense that the evil intent of the transgressing sons toward the Roman Empire left him no choice but to order the execution. Thus, while Caracalla discourages pity for his brother and shows anger at the end of his speech, a

more prudent strategy for uniting the empire and for proving the justice of the fratricide would have been for him to encourage pity toward his brother and moreover, to show that he feels that pity himself and that he has not lost all of his “natural feelings” toward a brother in his pursuit of more power. *Titus Andronicus* also eschews pity and in some cases, the “natural feelings of a father” which transforms its familial killings from a necessary evil to just plain evil.

IV

The plays discussed here contain a thread, that knits them together. They all made an argument against an imperial future for England, which was viewed as destructive to a nation and its people. The chief catalyst of destruction is an absence of pity, mercy, and just action, and since these attributes are associated with Christianity, the plays represent empires, be they Spanish, Ottoman, or Roman, as both not Christian and also as devoid of values that would be associated with Christianity. Empires are instead associated with lack of pity, lack of mercy, and lack of just action and with relentless kin killing.

Since the examples of empires that the early modern English had before them were not Christian, it is easy to understand that these empires would be depicted by playwrights as absent Christian values. It is particularly clear that the Spanish would be staged in this manner because they were generally reviled by the English. And although the Ottomans could sometimes be represented on stage in a positive manner, it is not a surprise that the Ottoman Empire could just as well be portrayed as wanting in mercy and justice and therefore in Christian values. The Moors are found in several empires: as part of the Spanish Empire, part of the Ottoman Empire, or as in *Titus*, found within the

Roman Empire, but wherever they are, the playwrights associate them with Islam. In the case of the Moors that I investigate, they do not possess Christian values, and again, this is not a surprise.

It is more surprising, however, that the Roman Empire would be seen as categorically lacking in Christian values, even though its inhabitants were pagan. That is because England associated itself with the Roman Empire and would not necessarily want to identify itself with this lack of Christian values. English spectators would be able to identify with the Romans in *Titus*. Shakespeare interrogates the distinctions between civil Romans and barbarian Moors and Goths and blurs the distinctions between them, but he sets them up nonetheless so they cannot be overlooked. In *Titus*, when a Roman character is merciless, it is a symptom of a Roman Empire in decline and one that is not able to hold onto religion and other Roman values, such as honor, and respect for human life. On the other hand, when Aaron is merciless, it is innate evil and godlessness. As a dark-skinned character linked with Islam in English minds, Aaron can readily be portrayed as an atheist. This distinction between Roman characters and Aaron keeps clear the argument against empire that the play makes by showing that the demands of empire can corrupt people who would otherwise be expected to be merciful and just, even if pagan.

V

Aaron the Moor is a passive presence on stage during Act 1 of *Titus Andronicus*. It is probable that his character made an arresting visual impact on early modern audiences through his silent and dark presence, but as a prisoner of war held captive until

nearly the end of Act 1, he is conspicuously absent from its fatal errors, put in place at the beginning by Titus and then followed by Tamora and Saturninus.

The play's first act is obsessed with pity. It opens with an epic failure of pity by Titus toward Tamora. It then recapitulates the scene of pity two more times: first, when Titus's sons and brothers beg Titus to have pity enough to bury Mutius (pity felt too late) and second, when Bassianus, Titus, and then finally Tamora beg Saturninus to feel pity enough to forgive Titus and the others involved in taking Lavinia from Saturninus (feigned pity). During the course of these episodes that feature pity, the bonds of faux friendship supersede kinship bonds.

Titus Andronicus concerns itself principally with sameness vs. difference, as *The Spanish Tragedy* does. By the time the play opens, the pursuit of empire has so corrupted Titus that he cannot feel the sameness of Tamora begging for his pity as a fellow parent, which represents the first episode of pity within 1.1. His commitment to Roman religion obscures it. The sacrifice of Tamora's son follows a long speech by Titus about his own sons and their burial in the tomb. Titus accuses himself of being "unkind" toward his deceased sons because they have not yet been buried, as though he is disregarding his kinship with them. After the tomb opens to receive his slain sons, his other son Lucius calls for the sacrifice of a Goth ostensibly to appease the spirits of his deceased brothers and to stop any "prodigies on earth" (1.1.101).

The religion that calls for the sacrifice of Tamora's son is enigmatic, perhaps a pagan invention of Shakespeare. Remarkably, it is religion that initiates the endless cycle of revenge that the play illustrates. Rome's religion proves to be a religion of sacrifice and a religion of revenge: it enacts revenge through sacrifice.¹⁰ This is evident in

Lucius's words, "Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths, / That we may hew his limbs and on a pile / *Ad manes fratrum* sacrifice his flesh / Before this earthly prison of their bones, / That so the shadows be not unappeased, / Nor we disturbed with prodigies on earth" (1.1.96-101). The spirits of Titus's sons want their death in war avenged after the battle is over, rather than on the battlefield when it would be more timely. Goths have killed Romans in the war, and Romans have in turn killed Goths, which should be vengeance enough for both sides, but the sacrifice of Alarbus continues to add to the casualties on domestic soil.

Before the sacrifice occurs, Tamora calls out to the Romans:

Stay, Roman brethren! Gracious conqueror,
 Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed –
 A mother's tears in passion for her son –
 And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,
 O, think my son to be as dear to me!
 Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome
 To beautify thy triumphs, and return
 Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke;
 But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets
 For valiant doings in their country's cause?
 O, if to fight for king and commonweal
 Were piety in thine, it is in these.
 Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood.
 Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?

Draw near them then in being merciful.

Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son.

(1.1.104-120)

In the dichotomy between Lucius's speech about the demands of Roman religion and Tamora's pleas for her son's life, audiences can see allusions to Old Testament vengeance vs. New Testament mercy. To early modern England, Islam (like Judaism) was aligned with the judgment and vengeance of the Old Testament in contrast to Christian mercy, so in *Titus*, Roman religion and Islam have this aspect in common, an aspect that leads people, be they Moors, Turks, or Romans to slay family members.

In her speech, Tamora calls Titus a "conqueror," clearly delineating her place outside the Roman Empire and that she has been brought in by force. Despite her outsider status, she calls upon Titus to realize the sameness between them – their common experiences of parenthood and of children who have fought for their respective countries. Additionally, she cites the common "piety" of her children and Titus's children. She asks that Titus appreciate that her children, like his, are devoted to their mother, to their country, and to God. She hopes that his recognition of their piety, albeit to different faith systems, and his recognition of their other commonalities will arouse feelings of pity in Titus and cause him to extend mercy to her and her son. Tamora later repeats the word "piety" within the phrase "cruel irreligious piety" (1.1.130). One of Isabella's lines in *The Spanish Tragedy* illustrates that piety is one of the internal qualities of a person, closely related to the emotion pity, that leads him or her to act justly. Clearly, Tamora also links piety, pity, and justice. Her speech betrays her belief that someone who is pious will feel

pity more readily, which explains why she uses the oxymoron “irreligious piety.”

Nicholas Rand Moschovakis discusses Titus’s surname “Pius,” pointing out the different views of Titus from the perspective of Christian audiences: “Within the Roman context, the term denotes a hero renowned for deeds done in his country’s and his family’s service, however violent. But in a

Christian context it is jarringly anachronistic for Titus to be praised as pious, when major aspects of his piety are so manifestly un-Christian.”¹¹ After Titus has refused to be merciful, Tamora believes that any devotion between father and son and vice versa is devoid of religious dimensions. Unable to feel any affinity for Tamora, Titus is unmoved by her pleas, and his choice of Roman religion and honor over respect for filial bonds initiates the play’s revenge cycle, leading to an absence of justice in Rome. When Titus kills his own son Mutius just a brief time after executing Alarbus, Tamora is proven correct.

Titus’s murder of Mutius introduces the second episode of pity in 1.1. This episode is one of pity that comes too late, after Mutius is already dead, and all that is left is to bury his remains. After the slaying, Lucius feels as though he must bring back to Titus’s awareness the fact that he has killed a family member: “my Lord, you are unjust; and more than so, / In wrongful quarrel you have slain your son” (1.1.288). And he is right. In the aftermath of the killing, Titus denies any connection between himself and Lucius, Mutius, or any of his other sons: “Nor thou nor he are any sons of mine” (1.1.290-91). Lucius’s use of the word “unjust” recognizes that kin killing strips the empire of justice much more so than an affront to the new emperor, Saturninus. Shortly after, Marcus provides the same reminder to Titus that he has “in a bad quarrel slain a

virtuous son,” and again Titus denies any family relationship between himself and his sons and brothers.

Notably then, the pleas for pity invoke the familial relationships that Titus has overlooked in the heat of the moment, when he slays Mutius, and in the moments following. One by one, his family members invoke the sameness between themselves and Titus and call on these relationships. Titus’s brother and his sons kneel before him and proclaim their relationship to him. Their familial relationship is the sole reason presented to Titus that he should pity Mutius and bury him as Marcus and Quintus state “Brother, for in that name doth nature plead” and “Father, and in that name doth nature speak” respectively (1.1.368-9). In order to maintain his allegiance to Rome, he disavows all connection to his sons and brother. Yet in this instance, he wearily capitulates to allow Mutius’s burial. However, Titus’s pity arises too late because Mutius is already dead, and Titus has also initiated injustice in the empire by denying pity to Tamora, so Rome has already been set on an irrevocable path to self destruction.

The third episode of pity in 1.1 is one of feigned pity by Tamora, which occurs as a result of the initial withholding of pity toward her. Ironically, Titus and Saturninus inform Tamora that she will be treated with dignity (“thou com’st not to be made a scorn in Rome” [1.1.265]) directly after her son has been killed, which is in fact the opposite of what was promised. The war prisoners, Tamora and Aaron, are then released. It would seem then that Tamora has been integrated into the empire by her release and then shortly after by her marriage to Saturninus. While those actions represent her physical and institutional integration into the Roman Empire, her emotional integration is even more significant. She is emotionally integrated into the Roman Empire at the point when Titus

withholds pity from her and sacrifices her son. At that moment, she experiences Titus's complete lack of mercy, ensuring that she in turn will not be merciful to others.

In both *The Spanish Tragedy* and in *Titus Andronicus*, pity is presumed to lead one closer to just action. By the end of the first act, *Titus Andronicus* draws attention to pity's purpose through a jarring scene of feigned pity. The scene of feigned pity marks the beginning of Tamora's revenge aims. In it, the tables are turned on Titus as he begs for pity from Saturninus who believes that Titus played some part in taking Lavinia from him. Tamora is instrumental in this episode because she implores Saturninus to pity Titus, but her only purpose is to "find a day to massacre them all/and raze their faction and their family" (1.1.447-8), or in other words, to destroy the remainder of the kinship bonds among the Andronici. Once denied pity by Titus, she now has the upper hand and can influence Titus's fate. Tamora's pity is strategically feigned pity that leads the empire further away from justice.

VI

Similar to *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Titus Andronicus* construes the bonds between individuals in an empire as friendship bonds in an attempt to uncover sameness among people of heterogeneous cultures. While neither the friendship between Spain and Portugal nor the friendship between the Romans, Goths, and Moors is ultimately tenable, *Titus Andronicus* exposes, from the very start, the unsustainable nature of imperial friendship bonds, which are merely attempts to fuse together the different cultures within the territory. *Titus* exposes that these friendship bonds are doomed from the beginning by allowing the audience to know that behind them, Tamora and Saturninus intend revenge. By the end of 1.1., references to false friendship have replaced references to genuine

friendship and to family relationships. Tamora is the chief spokesperson of feigned friendship when she tells Saturninus, “nay, nay sweet Emperor, we must all be friends” (2.1.476-7).

Both the words “friend” and “father” are used during 1.1 to signify Titus’s relationship with Rome. Saturninus calls Titus “father of my life” just after he becomes emperor and has declared that Lavinia will be his wife (1.1.253). Though not a blood relation to Titus, Saturninus calls him father in part because Titus is to be his father-in-law soon. Additionally though, Titus has “fathered” him into his position as emperor by stepping aside from his own election and by fostering that of Saturninus’s. Saturninus’s endearing term for Titus emphasizes Titus’s fatherly, nurturing actions toward the Roman Empire, which include sacrificing his son’s lives in war and his daughter’s freedom to wed another man. Yet in order to be such a loyal father to the Roman Empire, Titus must abandon his fatherly duty to his sons and daughter, which is proven when he kills his son Mutius shortly after Saturninus has called him father. Additionally, Bassianus states to Saturninus that Titus “hath expressed himself in all his deeds / A father and a friend to thee and Rome” (1.1.420). Bassianus comments in this manner after Titus has killed Mutius, so it doubtful that he is praising his fatherhood in the sense of his personal regard for his sons’ welfare. Titus also uses the word “foe” to describe his family. For example, when Titus is in the midst of arguing about Mutius’s burial, he tells his son and brother “my foes I do repute you every one” (1.1.363). His kinship with his sons has vanished.

This confusion of terminology among “friendship,” “fatherhood,” and “foes” points to the deleterious effects of empire on kinship bonds, and the final part of 1.1. in which Tamora speaks falsely of friendship. When Lucius buries Mutius, he characterizes

Mutius's fraternal relationship as a friendship: "there lie thy bones, sweet Mutius, with thy friends'" (1.1.384). This invocation of friendship sounds pure, but when Tamora informs Saturninus to "lose not so noble a friend on vain suppose" (1.1.437), audiences know immediately that it is hypocrisy due to Tamora's aside to Saturninus about her revenge plans. Where Tamora had previously kneeled before Titus to beg for mercy, Titus kneels to Saturninus and Tamora. Tamora now has the opportunity to grant to Titus precisely what Titus previously denied to her – a chance to stand rather than kneel because one's pleas have been answered affirmatively. And she does so, asking Saturninus to "take up this good old man" (1.1.454). Titus's gullibility in believing that Tamora would be gracious enough to raise him from abjection rivals his lack of judgment in originally foregoing his election as emperor.

Act 1, Scene 1 demonstrates that the friendship bonds of empire are impotent because they are devoid of the constructive emotional response of pity. Without pity for elements of sameness between one person and another, even if the persons are culturally different, the empire has no affective impetus for just action. The seeds of the destruction of the Roman Empire of *Titus Andronicus* are planted from the moment that Titus refuses pity to Tamora, and by the end of Act 1, audiences can see that Tamora's rage will incite that destruction. Thus, *Titus Andronicus* makes that destruction even more horrifying than *The Spanish Tragedy* as it multiplies the episodes of violence and spreads them throughout the duration of the play, describing them in explicit detail and creating the play's argument against an imperial future for England.

Should Tamora be considered as someone who honors kinship bonds or as someone who severs them? Actually, she is a bit of both. Her pleas for her eldest son are certainly sincere, but an initial denial of pity toward her creates rage within her that cannot be extinguished. Once she becomes the emperor's wife and articulates her revenge plans to him in an aside, her combination of vanity and allegiance to her firstborn child eclipses her filial duty to her other sons. She manipulates her other children to activate her revenge plot, sends her newborn infant son off to be killed, and then later is forced to cannibalize the rest of her offspring.

Tamora's ability to honor bonds of sameness is not as unequivocal as Aaron's. Act 1, Scene 1 inaugurates Tamora's integration into the Roman Empire through two events: first, the withholding of pity to her and second, her marriage to the emperor. The dramas that depict Muslim characters indicate repeatedly that a lack of pity toward one's own countrymen and kin killing typify imperial pursuit. The blatant lack of pity toward Tamora begins her integration into the Roman Empire because it creates in her the impetus for revenge, ensuring that she will likewise withhold pity to others as she instigates the revenge cycle. In addition to the withholding of pity, which must be read on a symbolic level, Tamora's marriage to Saturninus is more concrete evidence that she is immediately brought within the folds of the empire.¹²

Tamora's allegiance to kinship bonds proves not as wholesome as Aaron's because it is not borne out over time. Her impetus for revenge would seem to be the grief over the loss of her son, and her initial pleas for Alarbus's life are the apex of Tamora's upholding of filial bonds. They seem to be filled with a desperate plea to prevent a heartbreaking loss. By the end of 1.1., when she states her commitment to revenge, the

feeling for her “dear son” is not entirely missing; however, it is evident that shame over her debasement as a queen who “kneel[s] in the streets and beg[s] for grace in vain” (1.1.452) is an almost equal instigator of revenge. By Act 2, to remain loyal to the memory of that son, she sacrifices the rest of her sons to her revenge plans. Although Martius and Quintus are first accused of Bassianus’s murder and although Demetrius and Chiron were certainly capable of bringing trouble on to themselves (i.e. through their lust for Lavinia), Tamora can still be seen as using these two sons as pawns, along with Aaron. Her manipulation of them pulls them into the destruction, the same as everyone else, and shows that her priority lies with her eldest slain son and not with them.

To deceive her sons into carrying out her revenge plans, Tamora uses a combination of attempts to incite their pity and threats to disown them as her children. She lies to her sons, creating an image of herself as victimized and informing them that Lavinia and Bassianus forced her into the woods and intended to leave her to die there (2.3.91-115). She calls on their kinship bond, telling them “Revenge it as your mother’s life, /Or be ye not henceforward called my children” (2.3.114-15). Tamora is willing to jeopardize the lives of her children Demetrius and Chiron by making them murderers. It does not matter to her that once discovered, Roman law will execute them. In contrast, Demetrius and Chiron still feel connected to their mother. They immediately kill Bassianus as proof that they are sons of Tamora.

In 2.3., *Titus Andronicus* continues to demonstrate its obsession with staging scenes consisting of unanswered cries for pity. At the beginning, the play endeavors to recreate the scene of unanswered pity again and again. This re-creation is evident in 2.3. when the brothers orchestrate a scenario for Tamora in which she can stand firm in the

face of Lavinia's pleas. If Tamora's intentions had prevailed, Lavinia would have been killed as swiftly as Demetrius killed Bassianus, since Tamora commands Chiron, "give me the poniard" with the aim of stabbing Lavinia (2.3. 120). It is Demetrius who persuades his mother that it would almost be merciful to Lavinia to allow her to join her husband in death, still possessing her chastity (2.3.122-7). Tamora then makes her vengeance more extreme by holding off on killing Lavinia so that her sons can rape Lavinia, but she first extracts a promise that they will not permit "this wasp outlive, us both to sting" (2.3.132). Tamora prefers not to be bothered with Lavinia's pleas for pity and mercy or to hear her speak at all (2.3.137), yet Chiron suggests that Tamora should be proud of her ability to hear Lavinia and remain unmoved: "let it be your glory / to see her tears, but be your heart to them / as unrelenting flint to drops of rain" (2.3.139-141), at which point Lavinia's begging ensues. Chiron has then been successful in staging a scene that proves the desperation involved in calls for pity that fall on "deaf ears" (2.3.160). Since the intent is for Tamora not to respond to Lavinia's pain, the scene is gratuitous. It seems odd to stage it at all except for the fact that one of the play's primary concerns is the repercussions of pity withheld. The play is so concerned with this aspect because it leads to revenge and because it is a defining characteristic of empires.

The plays in this project situate revenge in an imperial context. The setting illustrates that revenge germinates within an empire because of the dominant culture's disregard of human beings' ties to one another in favor of conquest of people and territory. Although not every revenge tragedy is set in an empire, those that are generally have Islamic themes and/or characters, even if their locale is the Roman Empire or Spanish Empire rather than the Ottoman Empire. Although it is clear in scholarship about

the “Turk plays” that no monolithic image of Muslims existed and that some images were positive, the revenge tragedies examined here use the Muslim character to prove a negative point about empire. This is true, even when the image of the Muslim is, in whole or in part, positive. The Muslim characters call attention to the negative aspects of an empire and warn England away from this particular political future.

The merciless nature of the Roman Empire depicted in *Titus Andronicus* serves as a warning. Lavinia’s pleas for mercy demonstrate that in *Titus Andronicus*, the emotion of pity is expected to elicit some kind of helpful action from the one who pities toward the one who is pitied and that sameness between individuals is the foundation for feeling pity. Lavinia reaches out to Tamora on a foundation of sameness. First, they are both women, and society expects women to feel pity more readily than men. Lavinia thus exclaims to Tamora that she “bearest a woman’s face” (2.3.335) or wishes for her to “show a woman’s pity” (2.3.147). She then calls on Tamora’s motherhood, an aspect of their gender, and requests that Tamora recognize the daughterhood in her. Like Isabella in Chapter 1, Lavinia expects not only an emotional response from Tamora but also the merciful action of Tamora calling away her lustful sons. Lavinia’s statements about the lion that felt pity and allowed his claws to be cut and about the raven raising baby birds other than her own illustrate that she expects similar merciful action from Tamora (2.3.149-156).

Even though the Goths were symbols of barbaric evil, the play does not emphasize the idea that Tamora’s withholding of pity and mercy is inborn but rather that it is a response to Titus’s lack of mercy toward her. It is evident that Lavinia believes that it is in Tamora’s nature to do as she does because she tells Chiron and Demetrius that “at

thy mother's teat thou hadst thy tyranny" (2.3.145). Lavinia tries to construe Titus as having been merciful toward Tamora because he did not kill her. However, Tamora reminds Lavinia that she is "pitiless" toward her because Titus "would not relent" after her laments for him to save her son's life (2.3.165). What she says indicates that her lack of mercy at this time has a clear genesis from within the Roman Empire and that it is not simply innate evil. And by the end of 2.3., she feigns pity once again, telling Titus that she will assist him by begging the emperor for pity (304) on behalf of his sons who are accused of killing Bassianus.

Titus Andronicus continues to depict scenes that demonstrate the futility of pleas for pity yet the paradoxical human compulsion to beg for pity and mercy nonetheless. In the enervated Roman Empire, the play's characters have no constructive outlet for dealing with their emotional pain over the violence inflicted on them. No hope exists that pleas for pity to the emperor or Tamora will lead to just action. The empire has no trial to prove that Martius and Quintus murdered Bassianus. Aaron's fraudulent letter (I will return to Aaron's artifice later) is the only evidence available, and Saturninus convicts the brothers immediately. Titus points out that there is not definitive proof when he states that his sons will be "accursed if the fault be *proved* in them," (emphasis mine) and then he attempts to have them released on bail (2.3.291). Their execution follows, however, without it being apparent that any trial took place. Titus's pleas to the stones, alongside Lucius's attempt physically to rescue his brothers from execution, illustrate the futility of pleas for mercy to reach those in power within the justice system (3.1.33-50).

The justice system, consisting of the Tribunes, walks past Titus, too distant to hear him plead. Lucius emphasizes that fact when he tells his father, "No man is by"

(3.1.28). Symbolically, Titus is distant from the arbiters of justice in this scene. However, it is worth noting that Lucius does appear on the stage and is witness to a portion of his father's pleading. This is significant because it shows that once Titus denies pity to Tamora, beginning the revenge cycle against him, and once the horrible acts of vengeance commence, the Andronici pull together defensively both in sorrow and in a commitment to escape their sorrow through revenge. Through sorrow and revenge, Titus remembers his family bonds when previously his heart was set on his allegiance to the empire. Granted, this manner of remembering family bonds is not to be desired, and the family comes together in a commitment to retaliation that furthers the empire's destruction. Nonetheless, we do observe an attentiveness to family bonds on the part of Titus that is unprecedented in Act 1.

His sons and brother have never forgotten their family bonds though. From the start, they collectively beg Titus for mercy in Act 1, Scene 1. Marcus and the brothers also protect their sister Lavinia's right to unite with her betrothed, Bassianus. The contrast between Titus and his brother and sons toward family bonds is important in highlighting what is expected of someone in a position of power in an empire. Titus's willingness to sacrifice his sons to preserve the empire is admired: he is, after all, elected as emperor in the first place but is weary enough from all of the wars to step away from the position. In *Titus*, the Andronici are the emblems of the way that empire takes a toll on sons through war. Empire takes a similar toll on Spanish sons such as Don Andrea and Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Since Titus is accustomed to loss of sons for the empire, it is easier for him to kill his son when he perceives that an affront has occurred to the emperor. In *Titus*, empire also takes a toll on daughters such as Lavinia through the

revenge cycle fostered by the affective climate of the empire. As the play's eponymous character, as someone who has sacrificed in war, and as someone who is popular with the people, Titus is symbolic of the empire. His character and temperament are shaped by the empire's demands and his allegiance lies with the empire to the exclusion of his family.

Titus is not a static character in this respect though. His turn back toward his family occurs at the point that the empire turns on him so to speak - when the emperor accuses his two sons of murder, which Titus intuitively knows to be untrue. It is then cemented by the heinous crimes perpetrated against his daughter Lavinia. As Titus foregoes his election as emperor, he is able to offer in his place, Saturninus who he must also intuitively have known to possess the ruthless qualities appropriate to rule the empire. After Titus's lack of pity initiates the revenge cycle, in a reversal of power Saturninus and Tamora replace Titus as pitiless heads of the Roman Empire.

At the point of the play when Lavinia is raped and mutilated and the Andronici feel pity toward her, it is no longer possible for the emotion to lead anywhere constructive. The emperor and his wife have committed themselves to revenge, so no justice can come from them. Although Titus and his family may not yet be aware of the emperor's vow of revenge, the crime against Lavinia is so horrifying that they understand that they can only rely on each other in the future. One example of how ineffectual pity becomes, once it is felt by the Andronici, is Marcus's speech when he gazes upon Lavinia after she has been raped. Scholars have noted how Marcus devotes much time to discussing the horror of Lavinia's appearance, but no action is taken to alleviate her suffering. That is because no action is possible, except the one that Marcus outlines at the end of his speech: "Come, let us go and make thy father blind, ...Do not draw back, for

we will mourn with thee./ O, could our mourning ease thy misery!” (2.4.52-57) and then later, revenge.

The Roman Empire is now characterized by pity that cannot save. At the beginning of the play, Titus was called upon to feel pity for Tamora across cultural lines, but now, in feeling pity for Lavinia, he and his brother and sons feel something more like self pity because the feeling is directed toward their own family, and they are contracting inward to focus on their own concerns rather than outward toward imperial concerns such as waging war. As I discussed in Chapter 1, self pity can lead to anger and then revenge. That is the kind of emotional trajectory followed by Titus and his family. They pity Lavinia, a form of self pity, which leads them into sorrow. When they fall into sorrow, they feel their family connection and lose their allegiance to the empire at all. All they want to do is to protect themselves and their family from shame and from further suffering, which then leads to anger and to violent acts of revenge. While revenge actions ultimately destroy the Roman Empire, the emotional path that leads to this self destruction – self pity, then sorrow, then anger - is apparent in 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1.

Aaron is instrumental in pushing the Andronici through this emotional path of self pity, sorrow, and anger because of the evil deeds that he plots.

VIII

Aaron the Moor is Titus’s foil in the play. While Titus represents the Roman Empire, Aaron remains outside the empire throughout the entire play. Until the point that Titus decides that Rome “is a wilderness of tigers,” he prioritizes Roman honor above protection of his immediate family. Aaron, on the other hand, does the opposite: standing

symbolically on the outside of the empire due to his blackness and his evil, he prioritizes his personal self above any imperial institution. This is evident in his allegiance to his child, a form of self reverence. It is not he who creates the initial conflict in the play that fuels the revenge cycle. However, once it has begun, it is he who takes advantage of it for his own entertainment and for pursuit of Tamora's revenge, which is a means of gaining power.

Aaron's first appearance on the stage in 1.1 is as a prisoner of war who is released after Tamora becomes empress. He does not speak a word until the beginning of Act 2. At that point, audiences hear that he aspires to gain as much stature as Tamora within the Roman Empire and that he is excited about Tamora's desire to destroy the emperor and the empire as it currently exists. When that occurs, he hopes that he will be able to seize power, along with her. (2.1.24-5). Audiences then see from the beginning that he is concerned with his own advancement and has no concern at all for the cohesion of the Roman Empire; in fact, he revels in the possibility of its destruction.

Tamora informs Satuninus that she will find a means of destroying Titus's family. That means becomes Aaron the Moor. After all of Tamora's rage at the end of the Act 1, audiences see Aaron doing the plotting to carry out that revenge. For instance, Tamora is thinking of lying in Aaron's arms while the hunt goes on around them, but Aaron tells her that "blood and revenge are hammering in my head" (2.3.39). Tamora's son was killed, but Aaron pursues her revenge. The play does not give a clear cut reason why Aaron wants to propel Tamora's revenge forward. One reason is that he is a descendant of the vice character, which means that he will revel in evil for its own sake, so he wants to see Rome destroyed "just because." Second, "vengeance is in [his] heart" because for the

moment, he is in league with his mistress Tamora, so he adopts her aims to the extent that they coincide with his. Finally, the most important reason is that he would like to seize power in the empire. This desire to gain power is apparent in statements such as “Upon her [Tamora’s] wit doth earthly honour wait, / And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown. / Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts/ To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress” (2.1.10-14). Clearly, he wants sexual power over Tamora to lead to political power in the empire, since Tamora is empress.

Aaron is enamored of the power that he gains by association with the empress and hopeful of the power he will gain by destroying Saturninus and other Romans. For several scenes, Aaron plots to destroy the Romans in power. During those scenes, Aaron’s objective of gaining power in the Roman Empire and Tamora’s objective of revenge against Titus and his family converge. Then, Act 4, Scene 2 represents a turning point in which Aaron’s objectives and Tamora’s diverge. Aaron’s focus shifts to saving his son’s life.

The sequence of events in Act 4, Scene 2 shows Aaron overlooking larger concerns with the empire in order to focus on his son. This focus parallels Titus’s. Like Titus, he contracts inward toward his immediate family. Titus’s focus shifts away from the Roman Empire because of real and felt sorrows resulting from the loss of children on domestic soil. While these losses were expected in war or permissible if committed by him to avoid dishonor, he could not bear attack from others at home, so his focus shifted to preserving his family rather than the empire. However, Aaron shifts his focus not because of real losses but because of the possibility of losing a child. He plots with urgency to prevent that loss. The limits of his evil-doing are then exposed surrounding his

child. His child is brought to him by the nurse, sent by Tamora, both of whom assume without hesitation that Aaron will “christen it with [his] dagger’s point” (4.2.70). In the affective climate of the Roman Empire, it seems obvious that Aaron will do away with his own child. Yet although he is no stranger to killing, as his recitation of evil acts indicates, he is unwilling to kill his own child, even when he will be “undone” by that refusal, as the nurse accurately predicts (4.2.55).

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly the emotions Aaron feels that propel him toward protecting his child, but the play provides evidence that feelings such as pride and sorrow, or at least the possibility of sorrow, are a part of it. For instance, he expresses pride in his offspring when he imagines that his son will “be a warrior and command a camp” (4.2. 179) or when, as a Goth reports, he tells the child, “thou mightst have been an emperor” (5.1.30). He also tells Lucius, “touch not the boy; he is of royal blood” (5.1.49). He is proud of the child’s potential as the son of himself and an empress. He envisions greatness and a leadership role for the child, although he knows that the child’s race prevents that. This pride intertwines with his high opinion of himself, as he sees the image of himself in the child, “my mistress is my mistress, this myself, / the figure and the picture of my youth” (4.2.106-7). This is akin to the way that Hieronimo sees in Bazulto “a lively portrait” of himself. Seeing a portrait or image of oneself in someone else, whether a child or another person in a similar situation, represents a close identification or possibly even confusion between oneself and that other person. Aaron’s pride in his son is pride in himself as well.

In addition to pride, the play shows some evidence that Aaron anticipates sorrow over the loss of his son and wants to avoid that emotion. The evidence that he feels that way can be inferred from his speech of evil deeds in which he states that

Oft have I digged up dead men from their graves

And set them upright at their dear friends' door,

Even when their sorrows almost was forgot,

And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,

Have with my knife carved in Roman letters

'Let not your sorrow die though I am dead.' (5.1.135-140)

Alongside Aaron's overt violence such as killing and raping is this act of emotional torture. It seems almost subtle compared to a murder or rape, yet Aaron is able to recognize that being unable to move past the death of a friend or family member is also trauma and that keeping someone's sorrows at the forefront is a strategy to be used in his repertoire of evil. His torturing people through prolonging their sorrow over death, placed in conjunction with his refusal to kill his son, shows Aaron's awareness of the emotional impact of losing a loved one. Being aware that others feel sorrow in that situation indicates to him that he also is susceptible to sorrow in a similar situation. The play suggests that one reason Aaron clings so closely to his son is to guard himself against the sorrow of losing the child. He may be able to observe and laugh at the sorrows of others, but it is a different thing entirely when the life of his own son is at stake. The nurse states that his son is a "sorrowful issue" because he is "black" and "loathsome as a toad / amongst the fair-faced breeders of our clime" (4.2.66-68). For Tamora and the nurse, sorrow is born side by side with the child because his skin color reveals Tamora's

infidelity and jeopardizes her position as empress. Killing the child is the obvious solution for them to dodge sorrow, but for Aaron, killing will engender sorrow, so he wants to protect his son's life.

Aaron's list of evil acts does demonstrate that being a spectator to someone's sorrow is delightful to him such as when he laughs at Titus's sorrow over both the loss of his sons and the loss of his hand. As a spectator, Aaron is passive, and although he states that he watched Titus from a distance and laughed at him, that scene does not appear in the play. And despite the killing, raping, and vandalism of which Aaron brags, audiences do not see much direct violence from him. Rather, he plots violent acts, which are carried out by others. If we consider his direct violence, it boils down to two incidents: first, he cuts off Titus's hand, and second, he kills the nurse who helped to deliver his child. Hers is the only murder the audience observes Aaron committing. Audiences see him set the scene for killing by casting Chiron and Demetrius in the roles of killers and by framing Martius and Quintus for the killing. But although he may plot killing and report that he has killed, when the play portrays him killing on stage, it is not for entertainment or solely for evil --- it is a killing in self defense in order to protect his child. This is important because it draws dramatic emphasis to his loyalty to his child; it is also the opposite of what Titus does: Titus kills his son, but Aaron kills to protect his son.

By saving his son from death, Aaron protects himself against loss of his son and sorrow that would result from that loss. Conversely, when he wants to hurt others, his strategy is to force them to focus on their sorrows so that they lose sight of anything else, which opposes the thrust of the Roman Empire's approach to loss. This approach is illustrated in Act 1 as placing closure on death and being able to continue to sacrifice the

self on behalf of the Roman Empire. Titus's acts of burying his children in the monument at the beginning of the play place closure on his losses and as a result heal him enough that he is able to continue his self sacrifice for the empire. Aaron's violence runs counter to this necessary closure. He keeps people mired in their sorrows over the deaths of loved ones, which ensures that they will focus solely on themselves and the insular concerns of family and friends rather than the welfare of the empire. This is what Aaron does to Titus when he plots Lavinia's rape. He encourages Chiron and Demetrius to such brutality against Lavinia that the appearance of her body will forever cause her family to feel sorrow. It is not the rape alone but also her physical mutilation that causes a constant visual reminder for the Andronici. Through Aaron's instigation, Chiron and Demetrius inscribe a permanent mark on Lavinia so that whenever her father or brothers see her, they will be unable to escape their sorrow for even a moment. For example, when Marcus mentions the word "hands" to Titus, Titus tells him, "O, handle not the theme, to talk of hands, / Lest we remember still that we have none. / Fie, fie, how frantically I square my talk, / As if we should forget that we had no hands" (3.2.29-32). While the wordplay about "hands" is darkly humorous, it is impossible for Titus and Lavinia to forget their loss and sorrow by avoiding speaking of it because the loss is experienced on their bodies. It is both visible and felt physically. Through Titus's loss of his hand, he experiences a compassionate connection to Lavinia.

Ironically, Aaron creates this compassionate connection to Lavinia because he brings the false pardon to the Andronici. In doing so, he causes compassion to become quite literal. If Titus was hardened to feelings of pity and compassion before, Aaron then forces the issue by creating in Lavinia a physical object that could never fail to elicit pity

from her family members.¹³ Titus wants to cut off his own hands as soon as he sees Lavinia. Then when Aaron states that a hand from one of the family can buy a pardon for the condemned brothers, the men all fight over who will lose his hand. After Titus forces his to be cut off, he now suffers together with Lavinia who also has had her hands cut off. Through the false pardon, Aaron creates this corrupt version of compassion in Titus. He causes Titus to experience his kinship with Lavinia literally and bodily. However, those who view Lavinia's suffering feel helpless to ameliorate it because of the extreme violence that has been done to her. Taking action to relieve someone's suffering is a key component of pity and compassion. Yet this element is absent for the Andronici, and the only amelioration they eventually seek for Lavinia is revenge against the perpetrators. In Chapter 1, "compassion" can refer to people who suffer together equally. This is what happens when the Andronicus family comes together around the mutilation of Lavinia.

Once Aaron devises plots that mark the bodies of Lavinia and Titus with sorrows that cannot be forgotten, he ensures that the Andronici will narrow the scope of their concerns to the family's suffering. As the spectacle of Lavinia's suffering body comes into view, the concerns of the Roman Empire fade from their sight.

To the extent that Aaron is able to plot crimes so indelible that they keep sorrows alive endlessly, he is able to assist Tamora in achieving her objective, which is also his, of "the shipwreck" of "Rome's Saturnine" and of "his commonweal's" (2.1.23-4). The destruction of Rome will lead Aaron to be able "to mount aloft" with his "imperial mistress" in both senses of the phrase, sexually and politically because with Saturninus out of the way, Aaron will no longer have to compete with him in either respect.

Aaron plots crimes toward the Andronici that while killing some, keep others alive to suffer sorrow. Sorrow suffered for too long becomes unbearable to the Andronici, and the play shows evidence of that because Act 3, Scene 2 connects sorrow to self destruction. Marcus presents Lavinia to Titus informing him that she is “consuming sorrow,” which shows the linkage immediately as though seeing Lavinia can cause someone to be consumed. Next, Titus explains how he uses his right hand “to tyrannize” upon his “breast” when his heart beats erratically with “misery” (3.2.9). He then offers advice to Lavinia lest her heart should beat too rapidly and because she has no hands with which she can “strike” her chest: “get some little knife between thy teeth / And just against thy heart make thou a hole, / That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall / May run into that sink and, soaking in, drown the lamenting fool in sea-salt tears” (3.2.16-20). This is an image of suicide directly caused by sorrow in which Titus imagines Lavinia using her mouth to cut a hole in her chest so that her tears will enter that hole, drown her heart, and stop it from beating¹⁴. It is no wonder that Marcus exclaims to his brother, “Teach her not thus to lay / Such violent hands upon her tender life” (3.2.21-22).

Since the play so closely allies excessive sorrow with self destruction, the Andronici at some point must escape into some other emotion (lest they actually destroy themselves) and eventually action. One escape from sorrow could be through legal institutions such as the Tribunes and courts. However, consistent with the premise of a revenge tragedy, legitimate channels of obtaining justice are obstructed and corrupt. This is true of *The Spanish Tragedy* and of *Titus Andronicus*. In *Titus Andronicus*, the emperor and empress who should play a role in assuring justice are culpable in crimes, so revenge is shown to be a means of escaping sorrow when the legitimate channels are obstructed.

The Andronici vow revenge twice. The first time occurs when Titus laughs inappropriately after being presented with the heads of his sons and his own hand that had been previously cut off. After Marcus points out his incongruous response, Titus declares openly to him that “this sorrow is an enemy . . . then which way shall I find Revenge’s cave?” (3.1.266), so audiences hear immediately that he finds the antidote to sorrow to be revenge. Marcus initiates the second call to revenge after Lavinia reveals that Chiron and Demetrius have raped her. When it appears to Marcus that Titus is not going to pursue revenge at all, Marcus then asks the heavens to “compassion” Titus by allowing him to escape his sorrow through revenge. He conveys the depth of Titus’s sorrows through a comparison, stating that Titus “hath more scars of sorrow in his heart / Than foeman’s marks upon his battered shield” (4.1.125-6). As a result of all of this sorrow, Marcus asks that the heavens take vengeance on Titus’s behalf.

As the orchestrator of *Titus’s* unique kind of violence, Aaron propels the Andronici to enter the endless revenge cycle in order to escape sorrow that has no closure and that cannot be buried along with a body in a monument. In the playlet of *The Spanish Tragedy*, the Ottoman sultan represents betrayal that breeds revenge. In the main play of *Titus*, Aaron moves the symbolism into the literal: he is the betrayer who breeds revenge. Audiences see that because the Andronici experience the violence orchestrated by Aaron, and then as a result, they believe that the Rome for which they sacrificed has betrayed them and turned into “a wilderness of tigers” (3.1.53).¹⁵ Since Aaron instigated the crimes against Titus’s sons and daughters, it is he who has truly betrayed the Andronici, despite how Titus’s most memorable statement about the betrayal declares it to be solely Rome’s.

Aaron's bringing the Andronici together as they focus on vengeance helps to foster his stated goal of destroying the Roman Empire, and the dead bodies at the end of the play prove that. He puts a halt to self sacrifice. And he exposes a weakness of a political structure based around that sacrifice: the Roman Empire is comprised of people who at any point may find that they can no longer sacrifice themselves to maintain or expand the political reach of the empire. Emotions such as pity and its outgrowth of allegiance to family and desire to relieve suffering run counter to the aims of an empire. Sadly, for Titus, who has sacrificed so much of himself for the Roman Empire, it takes extreme violence against himself and his family to awaken the pity and allegiance to them that had lain dormant for so long.

The curious part about Aaron's expressed objective of gaining power within the Roman Empire is that once he lays eyes on his son, he himself cannot keep this objective in sight. While he halts the self sacrifice of Titus and the Andronici, he was never capable of beginning any self sacrifice himself. For instance, Act 4, Scene 2 is the point at which Aaron becomes aware that his plots have been discovered. He even states in an aside that "the old man hath found their guilt" (4.2.26). Chiron and Demetrius are oblivious to that fact and are not able to read between the lines of the verse that young Lucius brings to them. Due to the use of a verse that mentions "the Moorish javelin," Aaron has also realized that the Andronici are including him in their veiled message about culpability. He comments sardonically to Chiron and Demetrius about how they all three are "captives" in Rome yet "advanced to this height," and Chiron and Demetrius take the comment at face value (4.2.34). Being aware that Chiron and Demetrius have been discovered in their crimes should spur Aaron to further plotting to prevent all of his

previous plotting from unraveling. Rather than just commenting ironically about being “advanced to this height,” audiences might expect him to be devising a means of advancement. However, in Act 4, Scene 2 Aaron’s plotting turns away from his status within the empire and toward the welfare of his son.

When Aaron begins to plot on behalf of his son, Tamora has forsaken him, according to the nurse’s report, due to his blackness. It is difficult to see the Tamora who desperately pled for her first born son at the beginning of the play in the Tamora who sends the nurse to have her new born son killed. The nurse describes the child in a manner that disclaims his family and national relationship to the “fair-faced” Goths by emphasizing his black skin color (4.2.68). The words the nurse uses on behalf of Tamora point out only Aaron’s relationship to the baby: “the Empress sends it thee, thy stamp, thy seal” (4.2.68). Chiron then looks mainly toward Aaron as the child’s father when he proclaims, “accursed the offspring of so foul a fiend” (4.2.79). When Demetrius talks of killing that offspring, Aaron calls his attention back to their family relationship by asking, “will you kill your brother?” (4.3.87). Yet it is surely not the fraternal relationship but instead the fact that Aaron asks the question while threatening Demetrius with his sword that causes Demetrius to say, “Advise thee, Aaron, what is to be done, / And we will all subscribe to thy advice” (4.2.128-9). Having subdued the murderous brothers and killed the nurse, Aaron then makes his child the focus of his plotting. Audiences see in subsequent scenes that the revenge plotting passes from Aaron to Tamora. The scene in which Aaron is suddenly apprehended while attempting to protect his child is preceded and followed by scenes in which Tamora schemes against Titus. Thus, it is clear that

Aaron has abdicated responsibility for following through with the schemes that he put in place at the beginning of the play.

Although Aaron is literally the betrayer of the Andronici, he is never the literal target of their revenge in the play. He does not figure as the direct target of either of their revenge vows (the first is against Rome and Saturninus; the second is against Chiron and Demetrius). He is instead symbolically revenged upon in the form of a fly (3.2.65-77). Vengeance against Aaron is deferred until the end of the play when Lucius punishes him in a state sanctioned manner, and the empire reorganizes around his punishment and Tamora's. Lucius uses Aaron to inform on others who have committed crimes so that he can attempt to purge the perpetrators from the realm. In exchange for the information, he spares the life of Aaron's son instead of Aaron. Aaron is not apprehended deliberately, but accidentally, as he acts to save his child, which becomes his undoing.

When he is undone, he is found nearby "a ruinous monastery" (5.1.21). The Goth who apprehends him is gazing upon the monastery and then hears the child's cry from "underneath a wall" (5.1.24). It is not clear that the wall is part of the ruined monastery, but it is at least within close enough proximity that the Goth can gaze upon it and simultaneously hear the cries. The proximity associates Aaron and his child with the monastery, which is significant because scholars have posited a Reformation context for *Titus*. Scholars argue that when Shakespeare employs Catholic allusions that he is invoking elements and attitudes of the Protestant Reformation in Elizabethan England. They agree that Shakespeare is critiquing these attitudes, but they differ in what they identify as the exact nature of the critique¹⁶. For instance, Jonathan Bate, in his introduction to *Titus*, argues that the play's allusions reveal that Shakespeare sides with

the Protestant reformers. According to Bate, by depicting the Goth who gazes “upon a ruinous monastery” (5.1.21), Shakespeare is drawing a parallel between the Goths of antiquity who destroyed the tyrannical Roman Empire, and the religious reformers who freed England from popery¹⁷. Thus, the play is pro-Protestant. On the other hand, Nicholas Rand Moschovakis argues that the inconsistency of the religious allusions demonstrates that the play could be as readily construed as anti-Protestant as anti-Catholic. Rather than being a polemic against either Protestants or Catholics, he contends that the play critiques Reformation violence in general, forcing English audiences to question the necessity of that violence, whether it be directed toward Catholics or Protestants.¹⁸

Clearly, *Titus* contains a significant amount of allusion to the Protestant Reformation. However, what is the relationship between the religious allusion and the argument against empire that the play is making? The plays in this study that portray Islamic characters, themes, or settings, all associate empires with kin killing, self sacrifice, and with a lack of Christian values of pity and mercy. Characters such as Moors and Turks, who would more readily be linked by English audiences to a lack of pity and mercy, function to draw attention to these characteristics of empires and to create an argument against an imperial future for England. The tendency of English audiences to want to displace problematic traits such as ruthlessness on to Muslim characters is used by the playwrights to critique England’s present and to warn audiences about the future.

The kin killing and self sacrifice dramatized in *Titus Andronicus* serve as a critique of two things. There is a general critique of empire as steeped in kin killing, as there was in the previous chapter, but *Titus Andronicus* also adds a critique of the

Protestant Reformation. The Roman Empire, to the English looked during the Renaissance as a model for themselves, is connected in Shakespeare's play with the problematic aspects of the Protestant Reformation such as self sacrifice and martyrdom, represented by the play's kin killing and retaliatory violence.¹⁹ Kin killing, civil disorder, and self destruction were already viewed as characteristics of the Ottoman Empire from which the English wished to distance themselves. These are also aspects of the Protestant Reformation that was occurring in England, and through its Reformation allusions, the play makes it almost impossible for the English to disclaim the similar violence in their own culture and religion. The critique of the Protestant Reformation set in the Roman Empire and the critique of empire in general are mutually reinforcing as they target the same issues. The play suggests to the English, who are experiencing violent religious and political upheavals, that the establishment, government, and continuance of an empire brings more of the same violence and embeds it for the long term in the political structure. This is evident in Lucius's unconvincing reestablishment of order on the empire at the end of the play.

The religious allusions related to Aaron are a set of intriguing incongruities due to his link for audiences to Islam. Moschovakis points out that the name "Aaron" is Biblical and comes from Israel's first priest, which would invoke Catholicism and remind audiences of "current controversies over church government," as would the image of a ruined monastery, mentioned earlier.²⁰ It is possible that the name could also invoke Judaism, since Aaron is one of the Old Testament patriarchs. There is a hint of Judaism when Titus kills the fly that symbolizes Aaron because he imagines that Aaron came to poison him (3.2.73): that Jewish men would poison people was a common early modern

stereotype. Additionally, Moscovakis notes that Aaron's accusing Lucius of "popish tricks and ceremonies" represents the anti-Catholic words of a Protestant Reformer. But first and foremost, because he is a Moor and an atheist, his character conjures Islam for audiences, which in turn explains the multiplicity of religious allusions surrounding him. One of the stereotypes pertaining to Moors and Turks was that their identities were slippery and that they could take on any identity that furthered their purposes. Aaron uses religion to his benefit to save his child: the fervor with which he protects his son borders on religious devotion.

The religious overtone that accompanies Aaron's devotion to his son is fostered by the peaceful environment of the ruined monastery in which he is captured and the reflective attitude of the Goth who gazes on it. The scholars who discuss the Reformation context of *Titus* do not discuss the significance of the Moor and his child being found nearby the monastery when they are captured and returned to the Roman Empire. They mainly discuss the Goth who looks at the monastery. The Goth's gazing on the monastery seems nostalgic and not judgmental or condemning, and the Moor and his child must be analyzed within this scene as well in order to see its full import.²¹

Renowned Lucius, from our troops I strayed
 To gaze upon a ruinous monastery,
 And as I earnestly did fix mine eye
 Upon the wasted building, suddenly
 I heard a child cry underneath a wall,
 I made unto the noise, when soon I heard
 The crying babe controlled with this discourse:

'Peace, tawny slave, half me and half thy dam!
 Did not thy hue bewray whose brat thou art,
 Had nature lent thee but thy mother's look,
 Villain, thou mightst have been an emperor.
 But where the bull and cow are both milk-white
 They never do beget a coal black calf.
 Peace, villain, peace! – even thus he rates the babe –
 'For I must bear thee to a trusty Goth
 Who, when he knows thou art the Empress' babe,
 Will hold thee dearly for thy mother's sake.
 With this, my weapon drawn, I rushed upon him,
 Surprised him suddenly, and brought him hither
 To use as you think needful of the man. (5.1.20-39)

The peace of this episode is evident. The Goth has distanced himself from other troops to be alone in silence, and he describes his viewing of the ruins as “earnest” (5.1.22). In solace this way and “earnestly,” he is obviously attempting to extract some spiritual significance from the religious ruins, and he would seem to have come upon it in the cries of an innocent baby. However, the innocent baby turns out to be implicated in all of Aaron's crimes and sought after. At the same time that the Goth seeks peace from the “ruinous monastery” so too does Aaron, which is symbolized in the word “peace” that he uses to soothe the crying baby. Even in light of Aaron's heinous crimes, it is difficult not to see tranquility in the interaction between him and his child. The Moor's attitude

toward his son is almost reverent, as he discusses the child's potential to be an emperor and continues to try to quiet him. He also discusses the "trustworthy" Goth who will honor his son's relationship with his mother, and as a result, protect his son. With his weapon drawn, the Goth disrupts this peaceful moment and introduces violence back into the scene.

This scene between Aaron and his son is set against a religious backdrop, albeit a "ruinous" decayed one, and set in that manner, it represents an inverse tableau of child sacrifice in the name of religion, war, and empire. Rather than sacrifice, it is preservation of a child's life, and rather than action taken for any institution such as the empire, war, God, or in Aaron's case the Devil, Aaron's action is only for himself as reflected within his child.²²

From a Judeo-Christian standpoint, child sacrifice can be both positive and negative. In Bruce Chilton's work about the Biblical story of God's asking Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, he writes that "a deep conviction running through Christianity and Islam as well as Judaism makes the offering of the son a requirement for the patriarch to be proven worthy."²³ For Christians, this sacrifice was also a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice.²⁴ Additionally, Moschovakis explains that the example of child sacrifice seen in the story of Abraham and Isaac was a "valorized example" during the early modern period.²⁵ At the same time, it was the sacrifice of Jesus that ended the need for all other sacrifices, so from a Christian perspective, continuing to sacrifice one's children was to ignore the import of Jesus's crucifixion and the gift he gave to humanity.²⁶

Given the possibility of dual views of child sacrifice during the early modern period, some positive and some negative, in what way would Aaron's not sacrificing his

child be viewed by audiences? It would be easy to interpret the scene of Aaron's trying to save his child as negative, especially if we assume that Shakespeare has made *Titus* an anti-Catholic play. If anti-Catholic, then through this scene, the play would be drawing attention to the evil of Catholicism by placing an evil Moor and his bastard offspring within the context of the evil monastery's ruins. The play would, in a sense, be congratulating England for having moved beyond such evil through the Protestant Reformation.

The scene of Aaron trying to save his son is more complicated, however, than the anti-Catholic interpretation of the play would allow. Since the moment of Aaron's speaking to his son is a moment of peace within the violence of the action, the play seems to side with Aaron and his son, if only briefly. Peace does not reside in any of the play's prior child sacrifices. Peace resides in the moment in which Aaron does *not* sacrifice his son, and the setting nearby the monastery emphasizes that. The play then returns to child killing in the next scene when Tamora unknowingly ingests her own children.

Certainly, nothing Aaron can do, with or for his child, one way or another, will enable him to be "proven worthy" among English audiences or within Roman society.²⁷ In fact, Roman society, and the Goths who have joined Lucius to defend and reorganize the empire, at first demand the sacrifice of Aaron's son to pay for his crimes and also to torture him – "first hang the child, that he may see it sprawl - / a sight to vex the father's soul withal" (5.1.51-2). Once Aaron has indicated that his son's life is important to him, Lucius wants to exploit that connection to cause suffering for Aaron. But then Lucius agrees that the child will live in exchange for the tales of crime that Aaron has to tell. The tales of crime in turn are used by Marcus and Lucius to reinstate the empire around the

rule of Lucius. The child is used at leverage to extract information from Aaron that can be used to cast the Andronici as fully justified in all of their actions and to situate all of the crime elsewhere.

It would seem significant indeed if child sacrifice in the Roman Empire ceased at the point that the Moor's child was saved. However, it does not. Titus kills Lavinia to place closure on his sorrows, ("and with thy shame, thy father's sorrow die" [5.3.46]), sorrows that the Moor's anti-imperial violence aimed to keep alive through the existence of Lavinia's mutilated body. By killing Lavinia and then enacting revenge on Saturninus and Tamora, Titus achieves a kind of macabre closure for the Roman Empire. Like the Moor's child, Lavinia is another "sorrowful issue." She will engender sorrow over and over again for the empire and impede its reconstruction. The play's ending offers little hope. One child lives, and the other dies. Even though the living child merges two enemy groups, the divergent fates of the two children conduce to the same end – to rebuild the Roman Empire, which is in tatters at the end, as symbolized in the "scattered corn" and "broken limbs" spoken of by Marcus (5.3.70-1). Although it originally fell outside the parameters of state sanctioned justice, the revenge plotting that has occurred among the Andronici and Tamora and Aaron is rewritten at the end of the play as civil war, when one of the Roman lords asks to hear who "gives our Troy, our Rome, the civil wound" (5.3.86).

Alive, Aaron's child does much more to help the Andronici regain their power in the empire than he would have dead. As though a trial is taking place with the Goths as jury, Marcus uses the child as physical evidence to prove that the crimes were initiated elsewhere and that the Andronici were only defending themselves. He states, "Behold the

child. / Of this was Tamora delivered, / The issue of an irreligious Moor" (5.3.118-120).

The child's skin color will testify to his origins, but Marcus also wants to bolster his evidence with the testimony of the Moor who still alive, like his son, "is to witness, this is true" (5.3.123). Lastly, he offers the Andronici's possible suicide on the rocks below as further evidence that the Andronici's vengeance was just (5.3.130-35). By stating that he and the other Andronici "will hand in hand all headlong hurl ourselves / And on the ragged stones beat forth our souls / And make a mutual closure of our house," (5.3.131-133), Marcus illustrates that little has changed since the beginning of the play in that the willingness to sacrifice the self demonstrates one's commitment to the Roman Empire.

The ending denial of pity to Aaron and Tamora also demonstrates that little has changed in the affective climate of the Roman Empire. Lucius keeps the living body of Aaron and the dead body of Tamora present as visual reminders of those to whom the empire should deny pity. In another display of rigid imperial rules, anyone who "relieves or pities" Aaron will be executed (5.3.140). Tamora is then described as "devoid of pity" and in an ironic use of the word "pity," Lucius characterizes the birds that will devour her corpse as taking pity on her (5.3.158). The final gesture of the play is to withhold pity once again in a way that prolongs the trauma that the empire has undergone because the two bodies remain as visual testaments to the violent events that have transpired. Tamora and Aaron are placed outside the boundaries of pity, and it is easy enough to say that they should be, given the crimes that they have committed against the Andronici. Yet it is still a move that the empire makes to separate the Romans from the non Romans. The Goths who have now rallied behind Lucius as "friends" instead of enemies can prove their allegiance to the empire by disallowing any pity toward Aaron. Should they show pity,

they prove themselves un-Roman and are put to death. No such pronouncement is made regarding Tamora.²⁸ While he fulfilled other functions throughout the play, by the end of the play, Aaron establishes an affective boundary that serves to distinguish between the people who can be included within the new Roman Empire and those who cannot. But even amid all of his evil, for a brief moment, the play nonetheless uses Aaron to point toward the peace inherent in maintaining the bond between father and child rather than sacrificing all in the interest of an empire. And he is still alive, although doomed, while she is dead.

Despite frequent references to the Devil, Aaron himself states that he professes no religion and believes in no God or gods. His evil acts also place him outside the boundaries of any religion. But what does it mean to be outside of religion in the context of a play in which religion brings about the violence of child sacrifice and of subsequent revenge? Because he is outside of religion and of the empire, Aaron has an instinct for self preservation that extends to his son, and the play does not necessarily condemn him for that instinct, even as it condemns him for everything else. Instead for a brief moment, the play provides a glimpse of an alternative for the Moor's child outside the physical and emotional landscape of the Roman Empire – a place in which the child is honored and protected as a result of kinship bonds in a way that would be impossible in the Roman Empire, even if the child were “of royal blood” (5.1.49).

¹Danielle A. St. Hilaire discusses textual precedents in classical texts for the human sacrifices that occur in the play, “Allusion and Sacrifice in *Titus Andronicus*” *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 49.2 (2009): 311-331. Others who discuss human sacrifice in the play are Nicholas Rand Moschovakis, “Irreligious Piety and

Christian History: Persecution as Pagan Anachronism in *Titus Andronicus*” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.4 (2002): 460-86, and Helga L. Duncan, “Sumptuously Reedified: The Reformation of Sacred Space in *Titus Andronicus*” *Comparative Drama*, 43.4 (Winter 2009): 425-453.

²The following are some literary critics who argue the difficulty of tracing the historical source for the narrative of *Titus Andronicus*: In “Getting It All Right: *Titus Andronicus* and Roman History,” Naomi Conn Libeler argues that “in the English translation of Herodian’s *History* the Rome of *Titus Andronicus* is identifiable” (265). She contends that Herodian’s history could be the reason that the Moor appears in the play. She mentions in particular some Moorish javelin throwers who appear in Herodian and how in them, “Shakespeare may have found inspiration for his Moor” (268). Also, she points out that Herodian recounts an era of Rome’s history during which Rome “was ruled by a dynasty of African rulers” (274), which she argues may also explain the Moor’s presence in *Titus*, if Shakespeare was following Herodian. As these two points represent her only evidence, there is not sufficient proof to make her argument about the Moor anything greater than a possibility. However, the evidence for the remainder of her argument, beyond what she says about the Moor, is more convincing (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 45.3 [1994 Autumn]: 263-78).

Additionally, in the Introduction to the play in David Bevington’s *Anthology*, rather than citing elements of the play that can be definitively traced to specific Roman histories, Katherine Eisamann Maus states that “Shakespeare creates what might be called a ‘Rome effect’ by an eclectic process of extracting and combining motifs from a wide variety of classical stories” (372).

Lukas Erne states that the play has a “fuzzy historical setting” and that “another insight twentieth century criticism has clarified is that, *Titus Andronicus*, contrary to Shakespeare’s other Roman tragedies, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* does not deal with a specific, well defined portion of Roman history” (“Popish Tricks and a Ruinous Monastery: *Titus Andronicus* and the Question of Shakespeare’s Catholicism” in *The Limits of Textuality*, Erne, Lukas, ed. Lukas Erne and Guillemette Bolens *Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature*, 13. (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2000), 135-55.

Finally, Emily Bartels discusses the source of *Titus* and states that the play is “unusual” among Shakespeare’s plays because it has no single historical source and that “to date critics have been able only to piece together [its] history from a set of chronologically, generically, and geographically disparate texts” (71). As a result of the lack of a clear historical source, it is not possible to explain exactly why a Moor is a major character in *Titus Andronicus*, and it may well be traced to Shakespeare’s imagination [*Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).]

³Conn Liebler, 268.

⁴Scholars relate how Queen Elizabeth wrote to the Ottoman Sultan Amurath III, comparing Protestantism and Islam as similarly anti-idolatrous religions: Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in early modern England*, (UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 148, and Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 51. Dimmock also discusses the negative view of Islam in John Foxe’s *Acts and*

Monuments in which the Pope and the Turk were equal contenders for the title of Antichrist (16).

⁵ Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2005), 13.

⁶ Burton, 257-8. Perhaps the omission of *The Spanish Tragedy* is an oversight. Or perhaps Burton had a rationale such as the appearance of the Islamic characters within the playlet rather than the main play, since he does include *Solimon and Perseda* on his list.

⁷ Matthew Dimmock includes *The Spanish Tragedy*, 17.

⁸ Naomi Conn Libeller argues that Herodian's is the history informing *Titus*.

⁹ For a discussion of the representation of Sub-Saharan Africans as opposed to Moors, see Alden T. Vaughn and Virginia Mason Vaughn, "Before *Othello*: Elizabethan Representations of Sub-Saharan Africans," *The William and Mary Quarterly 3^d Series* 54 (1997): 19-44.

¹⁰ Danielle St. Hilaire discusses classical precedents for Alarbus's sacrifice in the *Aenied*. She also argues that the sacrifice is an attempt to take care of the problem of revenge against the Goths without encompassing everyone in violence: "this new ritual, a "sacrifice of expiation" (I.i.37)8—literally a sacrifice "from piety"—moves the call to revenge from the battlefield into a symbolic space" (313). However, although she does cite classical precedent related to revenging battlefield deaths in an attempt to normalize Titus's act, she does not explain why the revenge of Roman war deaths winds up occurring off the battlefield.

¹¹ Moschovakis, 464.

¹²Bartels emphasizes Tamora's words in Act 1, Scene 1 in which she states that she is "incorporate in Rome/ A Roman now adopted happily" (1.1.459-60), arguing that these words illustrate her "integration" into the Rome of the play, a Rome used to cultural "inclusion" (79). For Bartels's overall argument in *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello*, it is critical that both Tamora and Aaron be integrated into Roman culture rather than considered as outsiders, since she contends that the Moor was central to the manner in which early modern England conceptualized Europe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, "Introduction," pp.1-20). I agree with Bartels that Tamora is integrated into the empire, but my reasoning differs.

¹³In "I Can Interpret All Her Martyr'd Signs: *Titus Andronicus*, Feminism, and the Limits of Interpretation," Cynthia Marshall offers a feminist interpretation of Lavinia in which she argues that "the rape fixes her [Lavinia], within the play, within the theater, and within the critical discourse, as an object of pity" (194); *Sexuality and Politics in Renaissance Drama* Eds. Carole Levin and Karen Robertson *Studies in Renaissance Literature* vol. 10 Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991, 193-213.

¹⁴Bate indicates that the image of Lavinia with a hole near her heart is from Ovid. It "sustains the image of Lavinia as Philomel, who, once metamorphosed into a nightingale, pressed her breast against a thorn to keep her sharp woes waking" (3.2, note for lines 16-17). *Titus Andronicus, The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd series*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

¹⁵When Titus comments that Rome is a wilderness of tigers, this comment is positioned within the play just after Titus has realized that neither he nor Lucius will be able to save his sons from execution and just before he sees Lavinia's injuries. Since Aaron's plotting

caused both crimes against Titus's family, Aaron is in fact the betrayer, despite how Titus targets "Rome" as the betrayer.

¹⁶ The following are some critics who discuss the Protestant Reformation context of *Titus*. Helga L. Duncan, "Sumptuously Reedified: The Reformation of Sacred Space in *Titus Andronicus*" *Comparative Drama*, 43.4 (Winter 2009): 425-453. Lukas Erne, "Popish Tricks and a Ruinous Monastery: *Titus Andronicus* and the Question of Shakespeare's Catholicism" *The Limits of Textuality* (2000): 135-55. Robert S. Miola, "An Alien People Clutching their Gods: Shakespeare's Ancient Religions" *Shakespeare Survey* 54 (2001): 31-45. Nicholas Rand Moschovakis, "Irreligious Piety and Christian History: Persecution as Pagan Anachronism in *Titus Andronicus*" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.4 (2002): 460-86. All articles addressing the Protestant Reformation.

¹⁷ Bate indicates that he is indebted to Samuel Kliger's book *The Goths in England* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952; repr. New York, 1972) and to Ronald Broude's article "Roman and Goth in *Titus Andronicus*" *Shakespeare Studies*, 6 (1970), 27-34 for this insight. He quotes extensively from Kliger about the *translation imperii ad Teutonicos*, which compares the role of the ancient Goths with the role of the reformers. *Titus Andronicus*, *The Arden Shakespeare*, 3rd series. Routledge: London and New York, 1995, 19-20.

¹⁸ Nicholas Moschovakis "'Irreligious Piety' and Christian History: Persecution as Pagan Anachronism in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.4 (2002): 460-86.

¹⁹ I am borrowing particularly from Moscovacich in finding a general critique of Reformation violence rather than the idea that the play is a specific anti-Catholic critique.

²⁰ Moschovakis, 481.

²¹ Lukas Erne writes that “the Goth’s lines express regret rather than sympathy for the destruction of the monasteries. Clearly, the Goth, potential spoiler of ancient Rome has undergone a conversion when he considers the waste of the spoliation of Roman Catholic buildings caused by England’s break with Rome,” 146.

²² He knows that his child’s skin color and ignominious birth preclude him from being an emperor, so he does not save his son for that purpose.

²³ Bruce Chilton, *Abraham’s Curse: Child Sacrifice in the Legacies of the West*, New York: Doubleday, 2008, 8.

²⁴ Chilton, 93.

²⁵ Moschovakis, 468-9.

²⁶ Chilton, 95.

²⁷ Chilton, 8.

²⁸ Bartels argues that Lucius does not need to threaten to execute anyone who pities Tamora because she is already deceased and thus less likely to draw attention from people. However, it would be possible that her corpse could draw the pity of someone who might wish to bury her (98).

“Conquest Ruthlessly Pursued”: The Image of the Turk and Kin Killing in the Argument
against Empire in *Tamburlaine I* and *II*

When Zenocrate encounters the lifeless bodies of Bazajeth and Zabina in *Tamburlaine I*, she calls out to Jove and “Mahomet” to pardon Tamburlaine for his “contempt of earthly fortune and respect of pity” and then herself because she “was not moved with ruth / to see them live so long in misery” (5.1.366; 368-9).¹ The bodies of the Turk and his wife become, in the words of Zenocrate, emblems of “conquest ruthlessly pursued” (5.1.367), although not in the way with which the English would be most familiar.

More familiar, of course, would be the Ottoman sultan as the conqueror, but *Tamburlaine I* offers the unexpected image of Turk as victim instead. Rather than making the Turks’ bodies a spectacle in which the English would delight, *Tamburlaine I* uses the words of Zenocrate and even of her attendant Anippe who decries the “ruthless cruelty of Tamburlaine” (5.1. 347) to emphasize the pitiless nature of the conqueror and the pitiless enterprise of imperial conquest. This emphasis creates an argument against empire in *Tamburlaine I* and *II*: one of that argument’s main components is brought about by the play’s use of the Turk in a manner that is unexpected and counter to stereotype in much the same way that *Titus* uses the figure of the Moor, counter to stereotype, to create an argument against empire. I have covered the stereotype of the Ottoman sultan as ruthless kin killer in my introduction.

Tamburlaine I and *II* will be considered here because scenes can be paired not only within each but also across both plays in illuminating ways. For instance, Tamburlaine’s offer of the different colored flags and tents (and the possibility of mercy)

to Damascus in Act 5, Scene 1 of *Tamburlaine I* parallels his offer of those flags and tents to Babylon in Act, 5, Scene 1 of *Tamburlaine II*. Classical allusions to parents killing their children in *Tamburlaine I* in the scene of the torture of Bajazeth and Zabina point to the scenes in *Tamburlaine II* in which Olympia kills her son and Tamburlaine also kills his son. *Tamburlaine II* contains pairing scenes of religious ambiguity: one in Act 2, Scenes 1-2 in which the Christians lose the battle against the Turks, after having broken their vow to them, and again in Act 5, Scene 1 when Tamburlaine burns the Qu'ran. In the Qu'ran burning scene, Tamburlaine refers to killing "Mahomet's" kinsmen without repercussion. He expects Mahomet to avenge their deaths. This is an important moment that links empire building and family killing, as Tamburlaine, the self proclaimed "Scourge of God" struggles to determine which God is the force behind his conquest.²

In addition to the paired scenes, the scenes of the imprisonment and suicides of Bajazeth and Zabina are a focal point for my analysis because they demonstrate that even the defeated Turk and his wife are ultimately people who deserve pity. Zenocrate's noble eulogy for the couple directs audiences to feel something in addition to mere delight at the fate of the sultan and his wife.

II

The scenes of the imprisonment and suicide of Bajazeth and Zabina are central to *Tamburlaine I* not only because they portray the Ottoman sultan and his wife as objects of pity, but also because they focus on the self consumption, which is central to both. While I have used the word "self destruction" to describe the killing of kin and countrymen in *The Spanish Tragedy* and "self sacrifice" to describe the same in *Titus*

Andronicus, “self consumption” applies most to *Tamburlaine*’s kin killing and imperial conquest.

Conquest for Tamburlaine is an almost indiscriminate consumption of those around him, even if they are those with whom he shares a genealogy such as his son or the Turks: he kills his own son in Part II because of the son’s martial betrayal – essentially a betrayal of the father’s obsession with conquest.³ He also imprisons and starves the Turk and his wife. Early modern accounts would have it that the Scythians are closely related to the Ottoman Turks and sometimes even considered to be one and the same. For instance, in *Of the Rus Commonwealth* (1591), the English travel writer Giles Fletcher explains the genealogy of the Crim Tartars who live in the territory bordering Russia and whose ancestors are the Scythians and descendants the Turks:

They [the Crim Tartars] are the very same that sometimes were called Scythae Nomads, or the Scythian shepherds, by the Greeks and Latins. Some think that the Turks took their beginning from the nation of the Crim Tartars, of which opinion is Laonikos Chalcondyles the Greek historiographer in his first book of his Turkish story, wherein he followeth divers possible conjectures. The first, taken from the very name itself, for that the word signifieth a shepherd or one that followeth a vagrant and wild kind of life.⁴

This passage from Fletcher relates the early modern belief that the Scythians were the ancestors to the Turks by way of the Crim Tartars. While critic Lisa Hopkins makes clear that Tamburlaine is associated throughout the play with a variety of ethnic origins from Russian to Roman to Scythian to Turkish, Marlowe describes him first and foremost as a

“Scythian shepherd,” which emphasizes his ancestry to the Turks.⁵ Additionally, Patricia

A. Cahill draws significant attention to Tamburlaine’s similarity to the Turk:

Thus while it is true that the play does not represent Tamburlaine either as a Turk or as a friend to Turks or to Islam – he overthrows Bajazeth, emperor of the Turks (something that the historical Timur in fact succeeded in doing in 1402); fights against Turkish soldiers; and burns the Koran – it shows awareness of the Elizabethan theory that Turks, Scythians, and Tartars comprise one ‘people,’ and it insists, in a variety of ways, that Tamburlaine be read as Turkish.⁶

I focus primarily on aspects that the Scythian character Tamburlaine shares with the Turks of other plays: a pitiless nature and kin killing. It may be that Marlowe was completely unaware of the early modern belief that the Turks descended from the Scythians, but he nonetheless created in Tamburlaine a character who displays traits typically associated with the Turks. When Tamburlaine denies pity to Bajazeth and Zabina and to the virgins of Damascus, he is displaying Turkish traits. Tamburlaine’s imperial conquest consumes the Self when he kills his own son. If Marlowe was aware of the belief that Turks descended from Scythians, then it is possible that Tamburlaine’s driving the sultan and his wife to suicide is also a form of self consumption, namely Tamburlaine consuming his descendants. *Tamburlaine I* and *II* then pursue the familiar themes that use Islamic self consumption to create an argument against empire.

III

Zenocrate’s function in the *Tamburlaine* plays is worth exploring because she is one of the only people who manages to conquer Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine is never

conquered in battle in either *Part One* or *Part Two*. When he is conquered, it is by love of Zenocrate in *Part One* and by death in *Part Two* - first Zenocrate's and finally his own.

Tamburlaine II ends with the sense that empire endures regardless of Tamburlaine's death because it dramatizes the succession of the crown to Tamburlaine's second born son, Amyras. In this respect, it differs from *The Spanish Tragedy* in which the heirs to the crown have been massacred and the empire extinguished by the end of the play or *Titus Andronicus* in which the corpses of the imperial leaders are strewn about the stage, and Lucius must reestablish a sense that the Roman Empire has any future whatsoever. What is at stake with Tamburlaine's death is not the existence of the empire but its expansion through conquest/consumption and whether the son can carry on the legacy of "the scourge and terror of God" and be as ruthless in conquest as his father.

Aside from death, Zenocrate conquers Tamburlaine metaphorically when he falls in love with her. It is perhaps too strong to call Zenocrate the play's conscience or even Tamburlaine's conscience, but clearly, her femininity mitigates the extreme masculinity of Tamburlaine's warrior self: for instance, in *Part Two*, when Tamburlaine has given his sons a rousing warrior speech about fields "sprinkled with the brains of slaughter'd men" which to navigate require that one "must armed wade up to the chin in blood" (1.3.84), Zenocrate is the voice of reason who calls attention to the unnecessary severity of Tamburlaine's message: "My lord, such speeches to our princely sons / Dismay their minds before they come to prove / the wounding troubles angry war affords" (1.3.85). Nonetheless, Tamburlaine's second and third born sons have already adopted his devotion to conquest and self consumption and will gladly wade through blood and gore

to gain a crown (1.3.88-95). On the other hand, perhaps Tamburlaine's oldest son Calyphas may have absorbed more of his mother's femininity.

Zenocrate brings pause to the self consumption of conquest through her reflection on the significance of the scene of slaughter and suicide in Act 5 of *Part One* and because she motivates the single merciful act of Tamburlaine during the play – the sparing of her father's life. Act 5 demonstrates the divergent ways in which spectacles of carnage strike the eyes of Zenocrate and Tamburlaine respectively. The bodies of Bajazeth and Zabina are to Zenocrate's eyes a "bloody spectacle," and upon seeing them, she curses her "wretched eyes . . . gluttoned with these grievous objects [that] tell my soul more tales of bleeding ruth" (5.1.344). Her eyes consume and gorge on the sight of Bajazeth's and Zabina's bodies, which not only provide an unwelcome feast of pity but also tell a story that demands that particular emotional response from Zenocrate. Later, when Zenocrate's betrothed, Arabia, appears to her, wounded by Tamburlaine, they exchange love, grief, and compassion by way of a reciprocal viewing of one another; through it, Zenocrate underscores her feelings of compassion by expressing her grief as a physical wound much like his – "Behold Zenocrate, the cursed object / Whose fortunes never mastered her griefs: / Behold her wounded in conceit for thee, / As much as thy fair body is for me" (5.1.414-17). In this way, she suffers together with him and hopes to alleviate his suffering before death in keeping with compassionate feelings.

On the other hand, when Tamburlaine comes upon the same sights of Bajazeth and Zabina and of Arabia, he considers them "all sights of power to grace my victory" and "objects fit for Tamburlaine, / Wherein as in a mirror may be seen / His honour, that consists in shedding blood / when men presume to manage arms with him" (1.5.1.475-

479). The sight of the bodies reflects back to Tamburlaine the conqueror identity that feeds him.

The only sight of death that conquers Tamburlaine is the death of Zenocrate in *Part II*. That he is conquered is evident in his description of himself as “raving, impatient, desperate, and mad” which contrasts with his self possession during his conquests (2.4.112). Continuing an emphasis on sight from *Part One*, the play shows Tamburlaine lamenting that death has overtaken Zenocrate’s eyes and that he would like for her to be able to see him, mad with grief, from her vantage point in the afterlife “Behold me here, divine Zenocrate” (II.2.4.111). As in *Part One*, when Zenocrate views the corpses of Bajazeth and Zabina and the virgins, sight engenders pity, when Tamburlaine imagines that Zenocrate’s viewing him would inevitably make her pity him and want to prove that she pities him: “and if thou pitiest Tamburlaine the Great, / Come down from heaven and live with me again!” (II. 2.4.117-18). Remarkably, this is the only moment in both plays in which Tamburlaine expresses a desire to be pitied, which directly contrasts with his warrior persona; this moment illustrates that Zenocrate’s death conquers him emotionally in keeping with his earlier description in *Part One* of her ability to conquer others: “sweet Zenocrate, whose worthiness deserves a conquest over every heart” (I.5.1.207-8). Indeed, he also proclaims that her death is punishment for him, as it “scourge[s] the scourge of the immortal God!” (II.2.4.80). Tamburlaine calls himself “the Scourge of God,” a phrase that would communicate to Elizabethan audiences that no matter how many people he conquers, he eventually will be consumed himself through divine retribution.⁷ Before that happens though, he consumes the town of Larissa, the place of Zenocrate’s death, with

fire. This is the first consumption by fire in *Part Two*; the second is the burning of the Quran.

IV

Classical allusions to consumption of children in *Part One* connect to Olympia's killing of her son and Tamburlaine's killing of his son in *Part 2*, both in *Part II*; it is not a coincidence that he kills his son after Zenocrate's moderating influence on him has been extinguished by death. One of the classical allusions occurs prior to the scene of Bajazeth's and Zabina's torture when Tamburlaine defeats Cosroe. In 2.7, Tamburlaine tells Cosroe that "the thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown, / that caused the eldest son of heavenly Ops / to thrust his doting father from his chair / and place himself in th' empyreal haven, / moved me to manage arms against thy state" (12-16). Tamburlaine frames his overthrow of both Cosroe and Bajazeth in familial terms through this classical allusion and through other classical allusion later in *Part One*.

The Roman mythological story of Saturn and Ops simultaneously encompasses both a father's killing his children by ingesting them and a son's later rebellion against that destructive father. Saturn, the king of the Roman gods, becomes aware of a prophecy stating that one of his children will kill him. As a result, he eats his children as soon as they are born. However, after many of their children are consumed, Saturn's wife Ops hides their son Jupiter from him, feeding her husband a rock instead. Having been spared by his mother, Jupiter returns to overthrow his father. He forces his father to vomit up all of the other children he swallowed. Once Jupiter is in power, he continues the war to defeat all of his father's siblings who had been named the Titans by their father Sky. Going forward, Jupiter fears that one of his own children will defeat him, but rather than

swallowing his children, he swallows his first wife, Metis, who was prophesied to bear the child who would defeat him.

Reaching back from the story of Saturn and Ops to the story of Saturn and his mother Earth, and father Sky, we see that the myth of destructive tendencies between father and son spans more than one generation back to the creation of human beings. Sky is concerned that his children will become more powerful than him, so he does not want them to be born; he keeps them inside of their mother Earth. Earth is not pleased about having her children trapped within her, so she encourages them to cut off their father's genitals with a sickle in order to facilitate an escape. Saturn is the only child who agrees to this act of vengeance. When Saturn castrates his father Sky, the blood from Sky's genitals falls on Earth, giving birth to the goddesses of Revenge called the Furies and also the Giants, the Melian Nymphs, and Venus. This portion of the story is a creation myth about humanity because the Melian Nymphs later give birth to human beings.

By using the phrase "the eldest son of Heaven Ops," Tamburlaine refers to Jupiter, who at first was the youngest son of Ops, until Saturn vomited up the children he had swallowed in reverse order, beginning with the rock, making Jupiter the oldest of the siblings. When Tamburlaine tells Cosroe that he shares Jupiter's thirst for a crown, which motivated him to overthrow his father Saturn, Tamburlaine aligns himself with the king of the gods. He is an earthly Jupiter, one who will reign over the entire earth as Jupiter reigns in heaven. He identifies himself with a Roman creation myth based on consuming one's own children and also based on multi generational strife between father and son. This reference to Saturn and Ops is the first reference in which Tamburlaine's imperial pursuit of conquering the world can be viewed through the lens of the consumption of

kin, and when *Tamburlaine I* and *II* are read in conjunction, the Saturn and Ops story in *Part I* foreshadows the killing of sons that occurs in *Part II*.

So too do later references to consumption of children in the Bajazeth and Zabina torture scene. The beginning of that scene in 4.4 refers to two myths. The first is that of Jason, Medea, and the Golden Fleece at line 9 and the other is that of Tereus, Procne, and the rape of Philomel at line 23-5. Tamburlaine tells his followers that the sacking of Damascus will yield “spoils as rich to you / as was to Jason Colchos’ golden fleece” (line 9), while Zabina curses the banquet that Tamburlaine and his followers are about to have: “And may this banquet prove as ominous / As Procne’s to th’ adulterous Thracian King / That fed upon the substance of his child” (23-5), a reference to the same story in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* upon which Lavinia’s rape and dismemberment is based in *Titus Andronicus*. Both Jason and Tereus unwittingly feed upon their own children.⁸

Tamburlaine associates himself with Jupiter who escapes being consumed by his father and then later likens his followers to Jason who consumes his children. In both of these instances in which Tamburlaine deploys the myths himself, the part of the myths related to consumption of children are omitted. It is only when the Turks present a myth that this aspect becomes foregrounded. Tamburlaine does not overtly identify with the problematic kin killing aspects of the myths, but outsiders highlight them.

Part One depicts Tamburlaine conquering people indiscriminately, whether Persian, Turkish, Christian, or Muslim, but at the same time, it employs myth and imagery of parents killing children and of the vulnerability of infants and children to dramatize the connection between kin killing and imperial conquest. Similar to *Titus* and *Spanish Tragedy*, *Tamburlaine I* and *II* are particularly concerned with the linkages

between empire and killing of one's children or descendants. This is a linkage that Marlowe does not have Tamburlaine himself articulate, but more strikingly, the wife of the Ottoman sultan is the first to note it. This is striking because it places a critique of killing one's children in the mouth of Zabina, the wife of the very character whom English audiences would most associate with killing one's descendants in order to maintain his own political power or to maintain the political order of the empire: the Ottoman sultan. Zabina deems the act of feeding on one's children as "ominous" (line 23).

The English would also have considered the familial slaughter in the history of the succession to the Ottoman sultanate as ominous. As noted earlier, the Ottoman sultan Süleyman ordered his son Mustapha to be killed because he feared his staging a rebellion; the English were familiar with this account. English playwrights were also familiar with the Ottoman sultans who would kill their brothers either at the point of assuming control of the empire or during the wars that erupted to decide on a successor to the sultanate. For instance, English audiences were aware that the sultan Bayezid killed his brother Yakub when he assumed power and that sultan Mehmed II, after ordering someone to slaughter his own brothers, codified fratricide into law in an attempt to limit the civil wars that erupted after a sultan's death.⁹ The interesting part about the Law of Fratricide was that although it gave all future Ottoman sultans permission to kill their brothers upon assuming power, in stating the law, Mehmed II sanctioned the killing of his own sons by one another because he gave permission for the one of his sons who came to power to put all of his brothers to death¹⁰. The law then illustrated that there is a fine line between fratricide and infanticide.

Even with primogeniture in place, England suffered its own share of kin killing in deciding who would succeed to the throne, but from the English perspective, the succession to the Ottoman sultanate was much more problematic: it showed the perils of a world without primogeniture whereby kin killing regularly decided who would come to power. *Tamburlaine I* and *II* depict just such a world in which conquest determines the succession and in which Tamburlaine himself underscores that kingship depends on survival of the fittest in war.

The play thus turns on its head the images of the Ottoman sultan with which the English would be most familiar: first, as a figure who lacks pity for others and never deserves pity himself and the perpetrator of family violence, directed outward, rather than a victim of his own self-inflicted violence. In this sense, the inclusion of the Turks as victims of torture in *Part One* serves as a critique of imperial conquest from a most unlikely source; the unlikelihood emphasizes the critique and warns against an imperial future for England.

Although the accepted interpretation among critics that discuss Islam in early modern drama is that Tamburlaine becomes Muslim in Part II and that in Part I, he is more European and a friend to Christians, the classical allusions in Part I point to his association with the Islamic stereotype of the consumption of children that will be fulfilled by the child killing in Part II. The *Tamburlaine* plays question the justice of empire by employing the stereotypes of the Turks as remorseless kin killers in unique ways.

The slaughter of the Virgins of Damascus and the suicide of Bajazeth and Zabina are juxtaposed in Act 5, Scene One of *Part One*. In juxtaposing the two, Marlowe places the Turks on par with innocent virgins as worthy of the audience's pity. However, Tamburlaine himself remains unmoved by either of these deaths and admits that Zenocrate's feelings for her father are the only ones that move him. During the course of Act 5, Scene 1, the only parent-child relationship that Tamburlaine preserves is that between Zenocrate and her father; even more than preserving it, he honors it, telling the Soldan that it should be more dear to him than his kingship, "Come, happy father of Zenocrate, / A title higher than thy Soldan's name," (5.1.434-5). Carolyn Scott notes that the end of *Part One* shifts from violence to the nuptials of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate, to the merciful sparing of Zenocrate's father and the burial of Arabia.¹¹ Most notable to me is Tamburlaine's protecting the relationship between Zenocrate and her father, when he has otherwise severed so many other familial relationships.

It is worth observing that critics designate the shift at the end of *Part One* as a conversion for Tamburlaine; in doing so, they are reading the symbolism of Saul/Paul on the road to Damascus in Tamburlaine's journey to Damascus and finding that he, like Paul, undergoes a conversion.¹² However, conversion is perhaps too strong a word to denote Tamburlaine's marriage and his sparing the life of Zenocrate's father, and the differences between Paul and Tamburlaine strike me as more worth exploring. After all, Paul was blinded by a light, heard the voice of Christ, and subsequently converted to Christianity. Tamburlaine's conversion is not nearly so radical, as it is absent a divine voice and accompanied by the slaughter that Paul eschews after his conversion. Tamburlaine is determined to reach Damascus, and nothing prevents him, but once there,

the only voice he hears is that of the First Virgin pleading for the lives of the Damascans; and he does not heed that voice. It is difficult to see a conversion in Tamburlaine's killing the Virgins, which happens as soon as he reaches Damascus.

In theory, killing the Virgins and the Turk are part of Tamburlaine's actions as "Scourge of God." Being a Scourge of God lends a strong religious motivation to Tamburlaine's many slaughters throughout *Part One* and *Two*, aligning him with Paul who traveled to Damascus to persecute the Christians there. Although the innocence of the Virgins, along with the symbolism of Damascus, might make it appropriate to read Christian symbolism into them, there are no literal Christians, only Egyptians, in Tamburlaine's Damascus unlike Paul's.

In addition, the phrase the "Scourge of God" can be applied only inconsistently to Tamburlaine. Roy W. Battenhouse writes about the significance of the phrase "Scourge of God" to Elizabethans and to the *Tamburlaine* plays. Explaining that God sends his Scourge to punish the wicked and that Elizabethans commonly saw the Turks as Scourges of God punishing Christendom, he also says that "the Scythian Tamburlaine is, like the Scythian Attila and like all Turks and Titans, a Scourge of God."¹³ He then proceeds to point out the wicked traits of those whom Tamburlaine punishes, i.e. the Persians and the Turks, but he is forced to exclude the Damaskan Virgins: "the scourging which he administers is, except in the case of the Virgins of Damascus, more or less deserved."¹⁴ Battenhouse's statements reveal, albeit unintentionally, the limits of the phrase "Scourge of God." Tamburlaine kills the Virgins who are clearly not wicked. Further, Marlowe uses the concept of the Scourge of God quite differently from what audiences would have expected. Audiences would expect the Turk to be a scourge rather

than to be scourged. Battenhouse discusses Biblical examples of Christians and Jews punished by God's scourge, all of whom whom God might view as capable of learning through punishment and capable of possible redemption.¹⁵ The fate of the Persians or the Ottoman sultan at Tamburlaine's hands places them in a sympathetic position – as representatives of a class of people worthy of God's lesson and of possible redemption through His punishment.¹⁶ This would be a novel role for the Ottoman sultan, assuming it is appropriate to apply the "Scourge of God" concept fully to the play.

The religious symbolism and analogies to Paul on the Road to Damascus or "the Scourge of God" rest uneasily on the events of the plays. Christian religious symbolism is scattered throughout both plays, but a coherent pro-Christian, anti-Christian, or even anti-Catholic narrative cannot necessarily be culled from the references. In that respect, the *Tamburlaine* plays are like *Titus* from which it is a challenge to extract consistent anti-Catholic sentiments. As noted earlier, critics read *Titus* as a critique of the linkages between violence and the Protestant Reformation. Along these lines but in reference to the *Tamburlaine* plays, Hopkins interprets them as a more general critique of the connections between religion and violence.¹⁷

One of the strongest pro-Christian speeches by Tamburlaine occurs just after Tamburlaine declares himself Scourge of God and informs the sultan's Basso that he "will first subdue the Turk and then enlarge / Those Christian captives which you keep as slaves/ Burd'ning their bodies with your heavy chains" (3.3.46-7). Such sentiments do not appear often enough throughout the play to support a pro-Christian interpretation, and contradictory information in both plays, suggest instead that the religious references in *Tamburlaine* result only in incongruities.

Tamburlaine may spare Zenocrate's father, but Act 5, Scene 1 presents a series of imperial conquests and unrestrained consumption of the elderly, of women, and of children. When the First Virgin of Damascus complains that the Governor has overlooked the earlier pleas of women and children to capitulate, before Tamburlaine's "coal-black colours everywhere advanced" (5.1.9), the Governor defends his position by stating that he has put "our country's care" before the care of the women and children residing within it. He refuses to surrender Damascus and become part of Tamburlaine's empire. The Governor of Babylon behaves similarly in *Part Two*, refusing to surrender until it is too late. Much like Titus who prioritizes Roman honor above his relationships to his children, the Governors of these cities also seek to preserve an abstract ideal of honor, which arises from retaining the city's political autonomy. Of course, this occurs at the expense of its residents' lives, but the dichotomy between preserving political autonomy and preserving lives is a particularly gendered one: the women emphasize their lives and their children's lives, which the men are obligated to protect, so family relationships come to be associated with the vulnerabilities of femininity, which include both youth and old age. Yet femininity is not relegated to a private sphere, away from imperial machinations; the Governor uses it as a political bargaining tool to retain power over his city's government. In doing so, he demonstrates an expectation that anyone can and should feel pity for women and children and that even a world conqueror such as Tamburlaine will inevitably be so overcome with compassion as to forgo his desire for political power.

The Virgins draw attention to a plethora of family relationships in their pleas:

Pity our plights, O pity poor Damascus!

Pity old age, within whose silver hairs
 Honour and reverence evermore have reigned;
 Pity the marriage bed, where many a lord
 In prime and glory of his loving joy
 Embraceth now with tears of ruth and blood
 The jealous body of his fearful wife,

 O then, for these, and such as we ourselves,
 For us, for infants, and for all our bloods,
 That never nourished thought against thy rule,
 Pity, O pity, sacred Emperor (5.1.74-100)

They ask Tamburlaine to pity Damascus and then enumerate the types of people and the family relationships that Tamburlaine threatens to extinguish, emphasizing the innocence of those who stand before him, whose lives he will end. It is not until the finale of the Virgins' pleas that the holders of political office are added to the list of those who dream of Tamburlaine's mercy. These men "of rule" do not come in person to Tamburlaine but send their proxies – the doomed Virgins and an equally doomed "gilded wreath"/where to each man of rule hath given his hand / And wished, as worthy subjects, happy means / to be investors of thy royal brows, / Even with the true Egyptian diadem" (5.1.101-5). The Virgins argue that the Governor is the "ruthless" one who has "thus refused the mercy of [Tamburlaine's] hand" (5.1.92-3) but that other men with political power exist who could now overrule the Governor to make Tamburlaine the new ruler of

Egypt. Given that this portion of the argument is not all that persuasive, it is not surprising that Tamburlaine's response is "Behold my sword" (5.1.108).

Yet the men of rule who have vowed upon a gilded wreath do not represent the bulk of the pleas. The length and the dramatic weight of the Virgins' speech falls on the old, the husbands and wives, the Virgins, and infants in jeopardy – particularly the infants; they represent the culmination in the chain of images of jeopardized Egyptians; the phrase "for infants" is invoked just before the phrase "for all our bloods/ that never nourished thought against thy rule" because alongside the Virgins, the infants best symbolize those who intended nothing against Tamburlaine.

The "slaughtered carcasses" of the Virgins could potentially be a powerful visual spectacle of Tamburlaine's cruelties, but they are kept off stage; Techelles and Zenocrate only refer to them. When Zenocrate arrives at the end of Act V, she discusses horrific sights that her eyes have absorbed such as "Damascus' walls dyed with Egyptian blood" and "wounded bodies gasping yet for life," but she calls her sight of the Virgins "most accursed" because the Virgins "guiltlessly endure a cruel death" (5.1.321; 324; 330). Their femininity and their chastity prove their innocence, and their innocence makes them symbolic of Tamburlaine's merciless consumption of humanity in the quest for empire. Since a Virgin is also a powerful Christian symbol of purity and Christ's mother was a Virgin, Renaissance audiences would be likely to see Christian symbolism in the Damaskan Virgins.¹⁸

Additionally, the audience never sees the physical spectacle of slaughtered infants, but verbal references to them are the second potent example of Tamburlaine's merciless nature. Besides the Virgin who asks that Tamburlaine contemplate the infants

whom he is about to kill, Zabina's disordered speech prior to her suicide calls forth the images of a child who escapes slaughter and an infant who does not: "Go to my child, away, away, away. /Ah, save that infant, save him, save him! I, even I, speak to her. The sun was down. Streamers white, red, black, here, here, here. Fling the meat in his face. Tamburlaine, Tamburlaine! Let the soldiers be buried. Hell, death, Tamburlaine, hell!" (5.1.313-17). In her madness over her husband's death, Zabina speaks disjointedly about the horror she has witnessed. She begins with the horror right in front of her eyes, her husband's suicide, and then moves to a series of flashbacks of horrors in the recent past. Although the context of the speech is not perfectly clear, Zabina names "Tamburlaine" often, along with his colorful streamers, leading one to infer that she is speaking of the sacking of Damascus just a short time before. The other major clue is her talk of the child's escape and the infant who needs saving – no doubt one of the same infants that the First Virgin begged Tamburlaine to pity earlier in Act V. If Zabina's words are not specifically about the destruction of Damascus, at the very least, it is obvious that she catalogs an impressionistic list of atrocities committed by Tamburlaine.

Whether the words are about Tamburlaine's cruelties generally or about his specific cruelties to Damascus, Zabina associates him with the consumption of children and illustrates that he leaves dead children in his wake in his pursuit of empire. Zabina's speech is emotionally moving, and just as Act V structurally places the Ottoman sultan on equal ground with the Virgins as worthy of the audience's pity, Zabina places the sultan, her husband, on equal ground with children and infants as an innocent victim of Tamburlaine whom the audience will certainly pity. Innocent children, like chaste innocent women, are consumed by Tamburlaine in his world conquest, and the children

become the second icons of his destruction. As the empire expands, human life contracts. The audience's reaction to the Ottoman sultan's death is triangulated through the deaths of the Damaskan virgins and the children, suggesting that all three deserve the same response of pity from the audience. The play's equal depiction of a compassionate response for the Turks and the Damaskan Virgins is even more striking because the Virgins are imbued with Christian symbolism. *Tamburlaine I* is thus unprecedented in placing the Muslim character and characters epitomizing Christianity on equal footing as deserving a response of pity from Zenocrate and the audience.

Further, during the performance of Act V of *Part One*, the "brained" bodies of Bajazeth and Zabina become, for the audience's viewing, visual spectacles of Tamburlaine's lack of mercy: there are actual physical bodies serving as a focal point to intensify the audience's reaction.

Tamburlaine's flags hint at a merciful side to him that is briefly exposed when he spares the life of Zenocrate's father. But before and after that, he hints at mercy that never comes to fruition in either *Part I* or *Part II*. As he interacts with the Virgins, he reminds them of the chance for mercy that he has already provided Damascus, "they know my custom: could they not as well / Have sent ye out when first my milk-white flags / Through which sweet mercy threw her gentle beams" (I.5.1.67-9). Since the Damaskan Governor refuses to yield and only begs for pity when it is already too late, he contributes to the brutal end of his own city. Tamburlaine's formulation of mercy possesses a temporal dimension. It must be accepted in a timely manner, or it vanishes. Tamburlaine's formulaic method of offering mercy to the cities he conquers is part of the same "martial justice" that later kills his son. He follows a pattern demanded by warfare

and conquest, and his methodical mercy offering is unjust because it is impervious to pleas of mercy. The Virgins should elicit pity that leads to mercy, but Tamburlaine does not feel pity for them; the Governor's neglecting to accept mercy until it is too late is part of the formulaic injustice of conquest dramatized in the play. I will return to Tamburlaine's flags later when I discuss the destruction of Babylon.

VI

Tamburlaine spares the life of Zenocrate's father at the end of *Part One*, protecting the relationship between father and daughter. As a result, the end of 5.1 in *Part One* offers a sense of hope for parent-child relationships that is not borne out by the events in *Part Two*. It does, however, provide a glimpse of the plays' doubleness, observed by critics.¹⁹ While clearly *Part One* (and likewise *Part Two*) celebrates world conquest, its allusions to myth and imagery of merciless kin killing simultaneously condemn imperial conquest, creating an argument against empire.

The killing of children alluded to in *Part One* becomes a reality in *Part Two*, as the dark side of conquest continues to be exposed. *Part Two* is darker than *Part One*, given that the hero and heroine die, and parents kill their children. It also contains scenes of religious ambiguity that fill the play with uncertainty and contribute to the overall tone of pessimism. And of course, the second play has less of the doubleness observed by critics of the first play, since Tamburlaine loses his omnipotence when sickness and death defeat him at the play's conclusion.

Part Two opens with reference to the father-son bond between Bajazeth and Callapine, severed by Tamburlaine in *Part One*: "Egregious viceroys of these eastern

parts, / Placed by the issue of great Bajazeth / And sacred lord, the mighty Callapine, / Who lives in Egypt prisoner to that slave/ Which kept his father in an iron cage” (1.1.1-5). Orcanes, King of Natolia, (Anatolia), which was part of the Ottoman Empire, speaks the opening lines. Orcanes assists Callapine in avenging his father’s death at the hands of Tamburlaine: the framing of Callapine’s military offensive against Tamburlaine as vengeance for the wrongs against his father shows a loyalty between father and son that runs counter to the usual early modern image of deadly violence between an Ottoman sultan and his sons. It also runs counter to the violence between Tamburlaine and his eldest son Calyphas.

Act One of *Part Two* puts forth two key father-son relationships steeped in the negative effects of Tamburlaine’s conquest – that between Callapine and Bajazeth and that between Tamburlaine and Calyphas; the rest of the play explores these two relationships, along with a third that is introduced later between the Captain of Balsera and his (unnamed) son. The drive for vengeance on behalf of his deceased father comprises the father-son relationship between Callapine and Bajazeth in *Part Two*: in 1.2, Callapine presents his escape plan to his keeper Almeda, and then states, “Now go I to revenge my father’s death” (79); he will wage a war of vengeance in honor of his father’s memory, revenge preserving a connection between him and his father.

Rather than revenge by the son, the relationship between Tamburlaine and Calyphas is characterized by disownment and eventually destruction by the father. Ultimately, *Part Two* demonstrates how the Scythian Tamburlaine exceeds the Turks, in his capacity for cruelty, even toward his own children. This is laid out already in Act One, Scene Three when Tamburlaine declares his first born son a bastard because he does

not embrace war and conquest: “Bastardly boy, sprung from some coward’s loins, / And not the issue of great Tamburlaine” (1.3.70-1). He elevates his second born son Amyras above his first born son Calyphas because Amyras is a warrior while Calyphas proves effeminate.

The third father-son relationship in *Part Two* between the Captain of Balsera and his son does not surface until Act 3. It is another relationship destroyed by Tamburlaine’s conquest when Olympia kills her son, not because she is cruel but so that he escapes the cruelty of the Scythian and Moorish conquerors. This mercy killing is set beside the lack of mercy in Tamburlaine when he kills his son. After her husband dies, Olympia wants to kill herself and her son:

Now ugly death, stretch out thy sable wings
 And carry both our souls where his remains;
 Tell me, sweet boy, art thou content to die?
 These barbarous Scythians, full of cruelty,
 And Moors in whom was never pity found,
 Will hew us piecemeal, put us to the wheel,
 Or else invent some torture worse than that.
 Therefore, die by thy loving mother’s hand,
 Who gently now will lance thy ivory throat
 And quickly rid thee both of pain and life (3.4.16-25).

This passage is notable because it illustrates the dual purpose that Olympia believes this killing fulfills, which make it a mercy killing: the killing will both save her son from torture by the conquerors and simultaneously reunite him with his father in the

afterlife. Olympia's words are notable for the manner in which they lump the Scythians and Moors together as the apogee of cruelty. The word "cruelty" used to describe Scythians generally and Tamburlaine particularly is significant because its meaning is exactly the opposite of "compassion." While "compassion" entails the capacity to imagine another's suffering, to imaginatively share in it, and to take action thereby to relieve it, "cruelty" denotes the infliction of pain on a person and the utter disregard for his or her ensuing suffering. Additionally, the phrase "Moors in whom was never pity found" reveals Marlowe's characterization of the Moors in *Tamburlaine I* and *II*; the Scythians lead, and the Moors follow. As largely nameless accessories to the Scythians' cruelty, the Moors perform such tasks as drawing Bazajeth in his cage in *Part One*, "cut[ting] the leaden pipes" that bring the water supply to Balsera, and "l[ying] in trench" at "the castle walls" to cut off its food supply in *Part Two*. In Marlowe's depiction much like in Shakespeare's *Titus*, the Moors are heartless and evil, but in Marlowe, they are the evil helpers and not the evil mastermind as in Shakespeare. Additionally, by making the Ottoman sultan a victim, Marlowe sets him apart from those pitiless perpetrators of cruelty, the Scythians and the Moors. Audiences do not see the Ottoman sultan being pitiless; instead they are directed to feel pity toward him.

Olympia had said that when she kills herself, she will be reunited with both husband and son, and the family will be intact again, if not in their earthly life, then in the heavenly one to come. Her son agrees with his mother's intent and bids her to "strike, that I may meet my father!" This kin killing preserves rather than consumes the family unit (3.4.30). The conquerors – Scythians and Moors – would consume the family; this is

why Olympia's son welcomes death by his mother's hands; he tells her, "the Scythians shall not tyrannise on me" (3.4.29).

When Tamburlaine later kills his own son, he does so for the very different reason of disowning his son and disavowing any kin relationship with him. Throughout *Part Two*, Tamburlaine is shocked by the difference between his eldest son and himself toward war and conquest. Calyphas's aversion to war is effeminate, and Tamburlaine, who is hypermasculine, cannot abide it. Calyphas's aversion is also accompanied by a predilection for wine and women that Tamburlaine does not share. However, the most significant difference is the emotional one: his capacity to pity others in a manner that is impossible for his father, and likewise for his brothers, alienates him from war and from his family bonds.

Marlowe's presentation of Calyphas is certainly nuanced just as his presentation of Tamburlaine is. Tamburlaine is cruel, but alongside his cruelty, lies his love for his wife. Calyphas is certainly lazy and cowardly, but he is also more sensitive to the pain and suffering of others and to the horrors of war.²⁰

Act 3, Scene 2 reveals Tamburlaine's relationship to his children as it is mediated by war and conquest. Tamburlaine's focus on being a warrior as a biological attribute proving his father-son bond is particularly troubling when it comes to the relationship between him and Calyphas because Calyphas's approach to war does not fulfill his father's expectations.

Tamburlaine guides his children to escape the grief over their mother's death through returning to the consumption of human beings. While Tamburlaine was close to madness because of Zenocrate's death, 3.2 demonstrates his shift into action. The action

is familiar: consuming the town where Zenocrate died by burning it. The action also serves as revenge for Zenocrate's death, but revenging a death such as Zenocrate's in which no human perpetrator is responsible is, in reality, impossible. Instead, Tamburlaine burns the town where she succumbed to an unnamed illness, bringing "death and destruction to th' inhabitants" (3.2.5). These inhabitants are of course innocent.

Much as Titus attempts to escape from sorrow through revenge, so does Tamburlaine. Even further, he escapes through displacement of the feelings of sorrow from his family to the townspeople where Zenocrate died. During 3.2, all three of Tamburlaine's children express their intense sorrow over their mother's death. Calyphas refers metaphorically to weeping "a sea of tears for her," Amyras to his "heart consumed with grief and sorrow," and Celebinus to how his "mother's death hath mortified my mind" and "stop[ped] . . . my speech" (3.2.47-52). But even before they have declared these feelings, Tamburlaine has already commanded them to cease their mourning: "Boys, leave to mourn – this town shall ever mourn, / being burnt to cinders for your mother's death" (3.2.44-5). Burning has rendered mourning unnecessary. The town will hold on to the mourning for them so that they may return to the business of war and conquest. After his children's declarations, he once more tells them to "leave off and list to me, / that mean to teach you the rudiments of war" (3.2.53-4). As he and his children move geographically to conquer other territories, they will be placing more and more distance between themselves and their grief, interjecting a spatial aspect to it coincident with the emphasis on mapping and geography in both *Parts One* and *Two*.

Calyphas reveals his aversion to war and his sensitivity to the pain and suffering of others in response to his father's schooling in "the rudiments of war" in 3.2.

Tamburlaine offers his sons two speeches about how to be a soldier. The first in lines 55-92 explains the military science of forts and weaponry. The second in lines 95-129 is a speech about the glory of enduring a wound. Tamburlaine exhorts his sons “come boys, and with your fingers search my wound/And in my blood wash all your hands at once.” This speech is a response to Calyphas’s expressing his fear of being wounded in the process of learning to be a soldier: “My lord but this is dangerous to be done; / We may be slain or wounded ere we learn” (93-4). Here, Tamburlaine’s Doubting Thomas-type speech, does briefly align him with Christ, which is typical of Tamburlaine’s grandiose vision of himself as omnipotent in war and conquest. Whether it is the religious allusion to Paul on the road to Damascus or this one to Doubting Thomas, the Christian references surrounding Tamburlaine’s character gesture toward the divine but ultimately are corrupt because they culminate in conquest.

Calyphas’ sensitivity is evident in several statements that he makes during scenes between him and his father. After his father offers him the view of his self inflicted wound and asks his sons what they think of it, Calyphas responds “I know not what I should think of it;/ Methinks ‘tis a pitiful sight” (3.2.130-1). Christ asked Doubting Thomas to touch his wounds as evidence that he had been crucified yet resurrected, or in other words, as evidence that he was God. If Calyphas is the Doubting Thomas to Tamburlaine’s Christ, then he is being asked to believe in his father’s divinity in war, his imperviousness to the wounds of war, and hence his immortality that enables endless conquest. Calyphas’ response of pitying his father’s wounds and wounds in general is a reaction more in keeping with Christ’s suffering on the cross than his resurrection; it is an empathic response that contrasts with his brothers who beg their father for a wound. It is

clear that Calyphas pities any person who is wounded and not just his father because he states that the wound itself is a pitiful sight rather than that his wounded father is the pitiful sight. Calyphas differs from his father in his capacity to experience compassion for the suffering of those both like and unlike himself. The willingness of Celebinus and Amyras to be wounded proves to Tamburlaine that they are capable of “meet[ing] the army of the Turk” (3.2.138). Despite the deaths of Bajazeth and Zabina in *Part One*, Tamburlaine still must conquer more regions of the Ottoman Empire, and *Part Two* recapitulates the encounter between Tamburlaine and the Turks in the persons of Bajazeth’s son Callapine and Orcanes, king of Natolia.

The scene of Calyphas’ being slain in Act 4, Scene 1 dramatizes concerns over the proper place for pity, mercy, justice and familial bonds within an expanding empire. While it is true that Calyphas fulfills the stereotypes of the licentious Turk, 4.1 reveals a more important aspect Calyphas’ cowardice and womanizing²¹: his conscience. He tells his brother Celebinus that “I know, sir, what it is to kill a man; / It works remorse of conscience in me / I take no pleasure to be murderous, / Nor care for blood when wine will quench my thirst” (4.1.27-30). Fulfilling the stereotype of the bloodthirsty warrior, Calyphas’ brother Celebinus calls him a “cowardly boy” (4.1.31). This response would seem, in part at least, justified because Calyphas’ last statement about being thirsty for wine undercuts the more nuanced statements that precede it. At the same time, Calyphas is called a coward right after expressing moral compunction over killing. By using the adjective “murderous,” Calyphas equates war killing with murder. He also uses the phrase “remorse of conscience,” which shows that he is afflicted with guilt for what he

believes is a moral transgression. These reservations over war killing are a serious counterpoint to the rest of the scene.

Tamburlaine's justice in this scene is "martial justice" in which war supplants bonds to his family and his son Calyphas becomes "not my son" even in the face of Amyras begging Tamburlaine to forgive him. Amyras later becomes the son whom Tamburlaine appoints as his successor, so his pleas on behalf of familial bonds would seem to be worth honoring, although Tamburlaine is undeterred. And what Orcanes and Jerusalem perceive as "tyranny" Tamburlaine declares to be "war's justice" (4.1.141;144; 150). At this point in *Part Two*, early modern English audiences would most likely identify with the viewpoint of the Turk Orcanes who tells Tamburlaine, "thou showest the 'difference' twixt ourselves and thee, / in this thy barbarous damned tyranny" (4.1.139-41) and see in Tamburlaine someone who they do not want to be.²²

Tamburlaine Part One places audiences in the unusual position of pitying the Turk, and *Tamburlaine Part Two* places the audience in the unusual position of joining the Turk in condemning Tamburlaine's actions of kin killing.

The concerns of pity, mercy, justice, and familial bonds in 4.1 are the same concerns that I have traced in other plays that are created at the intersection of revenge tragedy and dramas that depict Islam. As it turns out, early modern English playwrights frequently cast Muslim characters as key players in revenge tragedies, and these dramas make a particular point about the injustices of emperors, conquerors, and empires for English audiences. Muslim characters were well suited to illustrate these points about empire because of their real-life proximity to the Ottoman Empire and/or the Spanish and Persians Empires. They were also particularly useful to illustrate negative points because

of their religious and racial difference and the early modern stereotype of them as pitiless. The association between empire and pitiless kin killing recurs in the revenge tragedies with Muslim characters, and taken together, these plays present an argument against empire that can be found alongside other positive attributes such as the imperial wealth the plays portray and that the English might envy. That the dramas that depict Islam are also frequently revenge tragedies is significant because it means that revenge tragedy's interrogation of the justice system and the morality of revenge occurs in imperial settings, and becomes in effect, the interrogation of the institution of empire – a questioning of its morality as a political system.

In discussing these aspects of the plays, I do not disagree with the assertion of other critics that there is no monolithic image of Islam in early modern texts. However, I am countering critics who find that the plays largely indicate England's imperial aspirations and/or envy of other empires and offer instead an analysis of affective cost of empire for individuals, both the rulers and those ruled over.

VII

Although the two *Tamburlaine* plays are not canonical revenge tragedies, their casting of war and conquest as an ongoing revenge cycle situates them alongside other revenge tragedies. Revenge pervades both *Part One* and *Part Two*; it motivates most of the actions. In addition to war, it spurs the killing set off by grief over Zenocrate's death and Mycetes' attack on Tamburlaine (2.1.67). Agydas finds himself "surprised with fear of hideous revenge" from Tamburlaine over insulting words he has spoken to Zenocrate (3.2.68), and the Soldan wants to wage war to seek vengeance on Tamburlaine for his abduction of Zenocrate.

The idea of Tamburlaine as Scourge of God itself encompasses implies a revenging God who wants to scourge people for their sinful behavior. In this respect, *Tamburlaine I* and *II* question the relationship between revenge and divinity even more thoroughly than *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus* where God has simply been deaf to people's sorrow, inciting them to revenge. In the *Tamburlaine* plays, the characters call out for revenge from the beginning. But they seldom conceive of God, whether he be "Mahomet," Christ, or Jove, as a deity indifferent to their desires; God can be called upon to avenge on their behalf. In fact, *Tamburlaine II* goes furthest in implying that revenge drives the gods of all religions. Two of its scenes of religious ambiguity make it impossible to determine which avenging deity – Muslim or Christian God or neither is at work: Act 2, Scene 1 in which the Hungarian Christians and the Muslim Turks break their oaths to one another and Act 5, Scene 1 in which Tamburlaine burns the Qu'ran.

Both Marlowe's Scourge of God and his avenging gods are situated in the context of conquest and empire. The English considered the Turks as Scourges of God, but Marlowe adds a dimension to the association between the absence of mercy and empire that cannot be found in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus*.

In *Part Two*, the Hungarians Sigismond and Frederick discuss their need to "work revenge upon these infidels" the Turks (2.1.13); by doing so, they break the oath that they made earlier in the play in the name of Christ. Sigismond finds this troubling and argues that "our faiths are sound, and must be consummate, / Religious, righteous, and inviolate" (2.1,47-8). Frederick reframes the oath breaking as an opportunity for vengeance that their God has put before them and that if they fail to take the opportunity, God may direct

his vengeful spirit against them: “And should we lose the opportunity that God hath given to venge our Christians’ death /And Scourge their foul blasphemous paganism? .../ So surely will the vengeance of the Highest, / And jealous anger of His fearful arm, / Be poured with rigour on our sinful heads” (2.1.51-2; 56-8). This easily persuades Sigismund, who informs his troops that they need to ready themselves to: “take the victory our God hath given” (2.1.63). Vengeance becomes synonymous with victory for the Hungarians.

When Orcanes discovers that the Christians have broken their oath, he does something quite unusual for a Muslim in this period’s drama: he offers as a sacrifice to Christ the peace treaty he and the Hungarians have signed. He then requests from Christ exactly what the Hungarians were sure He would provide them in the previous scene: revenge. Orcanes wants Christ to seek vengeance against Sigismund for the broken oath – “Thou Christ that art esteemed omnipotent, / If thou wilt prove thyself a perfect God/ Be now revenged upon this traitor’s soul” (2.2.58). Revenge, rather than mercy, will prove Christ’s divinity. The scene with Orcanes parallels the previous scene with the Christians: both scenes attributed victory to Christ. As Orcanes cries, “To arms, my lords, on Christ still let us cry; / If there be Christ, we shall have victory” (2.2.63-4). The only difference here is that Orcanes’s “if” expresses some doubt in Christ’s existence.

Act 2, Scenes 1-3 question whether God deity will help humanity’s pursuit of empire through revenge. Scene 1 shows the Christians calling for God’s vengeance, Scene 2 the Muslims’ calling, and Scene 3 the aftermath in which Orcanes does not know whether “Christ or Mahomet hath been my friend” (2.3.11). It is impossible for Orcanes to know, since in 2.2, he not only asked Christ to enact vengeance but also “Mahomet” to

“behold and venge this traitor’s perjury!” (2.2.54). Orcanes’ request for divine intervention from both Gods may be seen in part as his lack of religious integrity as a Muslim, but it also points to the uncertainty about who or what guarantees one side’s conquest. It could be the Christian God, the Muslim God, or both, but it may also be neither as Gazellus indicates when he tells Orcanes “ ‘Tis but the fortune of the wars, my lord” (2.3.31).

If revenge is one of the key forces driving human conquest and empire building, then does it also drive God to assist humans? Marlowe’s plays question the relationship between earthly omnipotence and heavenly omnipotence. They depict characters who aspire to be earthly gods by seizing and extending an empire. Tamburlaine seems to believe that the territorial conquest involved, the opportunity to “conquer all the world,” mirrors God’s creation and dominion over all the world, which renders it a fitting analogy for an earthly god (5.3.125). But how far does the analogy hold? And where do the gods part way with humans? The answers offered in Act 2 leave audiences with only a sense of uncertainty.

If *Tamburlaine Part 2* in particular clearly portrayed a God who supported the imperial endeavors of Christians through His vengeance, then the play would be arguing that Old Testament justice propels empire. The word “justice” never appears in *Part I* of *Tamburlaine*, and it appears only three times in *Part Two*. In that sense, the plays are different from *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus* because both are preoccupied with justice and characters often refer to it. Despite the infrequent references to “justice” in the *Tamburlaine* plays, when the word is used in *Part II*, it is at crucial moments that illustrate the plays’ concern with justice, namely, the justice of the imperial ideal of

conquest. “Justice” appears twice in the phrase “martial justice” that Tamburlaine refers to when he kills his son. In the *Tamburlaine* plays, scenes about revenge are, in fact, scenes about justice. When Orcanes speaks to Gazellus in Act 2 about their victory against the Christians, he imagines Sigismond being tortured for being a traitor to Christ and for breaking his oath to the Muslims, “What say’st thou yet, Gazellus, to his foil / which we referr’d to justice of his Christ” or in other words, vengeance by Christ (2.3.27-8). Although Orcanes will honor both Christ and “Mahomet” for his victory, Sigismond is quite assured that Christ has taken revenge on him: “And God hath thunder’d vengeance from on high/ for my accurs’d and hateful perjury” (2.3.2-3).

It is not only revenge but also “pity” and “mercy” that are important in Act 2. The vacillation between revenge and mercy in Act 2 creates an Old and New Testament dichotomy of what people ask of God, particularly Christ. In Scene 3, Sigismond hopes for “a second life in endless mercy,” a Christian ideal, and in Scene 4, Tamburlaine wishes for Zenocrate to pity him from her vantage point in heaven (2.3.9; 2.4.117). Although Sigismond linked Christ’s revenge to His justice, in fact mercy is the just outcome. And although the characters involved in conquest link revenge to justice as well, the plays as a whole ask whether justice can possibly lie in revenge rather than in pity or mercy. When Tamburlaine kills his son, his other children beg him not to, emphasizing Tamburlaine’s lack of pity and mercy for his first born. Elsewhere, even the supposedly fratricidal Turks condemn his actions. Sigismond’s double standard similarly shows that “martial justice” is not true justice.

It bears noting that all of the Christians mentioned in *Part One* and *Part Two* are Catholics, including the Christians whom Tamburlaine will liberate from slavery after

conquering Bajazeth and Zabina²³. So are the oath-breaking Hungarians and the citizens of Babylon. Babylon would be associated by audiences with Catholicism through the imagery of the Whore of Babylon from the Book of Revelations.²⁴ But it is less transgressive for Marlowe to embed a critique of Christian conquest in a Catholic context than a Protestant one.²⁵ It would be problematic for Marlowe to portray Protestants breaking solemn oaths to Christ.

It is by now a critical commonplace of that depictions of Islam and the East during the Renaissance were not always negative, for example, in the much cited instance of Queen Elizabeth writing to the Ottoman sultan to tell him that Protestantism and Islam share an anti-idolatrous stance.²⁶ However, with the plays examined here that critique conquest and empire, this critique often requires the different alignment of Islam and Catholicism— whether negatively or positively as Aaron the Moor’s moment of peace with his child in the ruins of a Catholic monastery.

Critics contend that a strong critique of the Protestant Reformation’s violence exists in *Titus*. Similarly, some critics find this type of critique in *Tamburlaine* although not to the same magnitude. As I quoted earlier, Hopkins argues that Marlowe associates religion generally with violence in *Tamburlaine*, but she implies that he is inspired to do this in part because of Protestant Reformation violence: “in the *Tamburlaine the Great* plays, there are two striking aspects to Marlowe’s representation of the repeated acts of violence in the play: the extent to which religious iconography and ideology accrue to depictions of violence and the fact that staging violence also often involves Marlowe in a ‘fastforwarding’ approach which brings him eerily close to his own time. This is because for Marlowe, religion, at least as he sees it practiced in contemporary Europe, is

violence.”²⁷ Other critics, like Elizabeth Williamson, also contend that the Qu’ran burning scene in *Tamburlaine* critiques Reformation violence: she argues that “Marlowe articulates a perspective that is more radical than simple atheism: namely, that there is little distinction to be made between the more spectacular aspects of mainstream Christianity, including martyrology and iconoclasm, and the superstitious beliefs typically associated with Islam and Catholicism”²⁸ Williamson also articulates the alignment of Islam and Catholicism in the play.

In *Titus*, the critique of the Protestant Reformation and the critique of empire operate together and mutually reinforce one another. The same is true of *Tamburlaine*. The imperial setting adds the critique of the violence of empire - or more properly, in *Tamburlaine*, the conquest necessary to build an empire – to the critique of the violence of the Protestant Reformation. It cannot be ignored that while plays such as *Titus* and *Tamburlaine* are dramatizing the negative aspects of the Protestant Reformation, they are likewise warning English audiences about the injustices of empire. *Tamburlaine* also warns against the vengeance that propels empire and the way it assumes a religious fervor. Again, it would likely be safer for Shakespeare or Marlowe to critique the objectionable aspects of the Reformation as a movement than Protestantism itself. In sum, what has been taken as a critique of religion in the plays also is, at times, primarily a critique of empire.

The focus on vengeance in Act V of *Part II* is almost relentless. When Tamburlaine conquers Babylon, he can be seen primarily as God’s Scourge of the Catholic Babylonians, associated with the Whore of Babylon. The *Tamburlaine* plays not only demonstrate the ruthlessness of the conqueror but also the ruthlessness of the

conquered. Facing conquest, the Governor loses sight of his own kin and countrymen, the “wives and children” whom the Second Citizen implores him to save (5.1.39) and places the abstract body of the state before their living bodies when he calls his citizens who want to yield, “traitors to our state” (5.1.43). Conquest is a cycle, and rulers will not yield, even when there remains a hope of mercy, which is why Tamburlaine’s multi colored flags that promise mercy ultimately prove that it is illusory.

The Qu’ran burning scene conveys the *Tamburlaine* plays’ interest in the connection of revenge and divinity.

Similarly, the Qu’ran burning scene has been read by critics as an indictment of Islam and also as a reminder to Protestant audiences that they too might possess an idolatrous focus on the Word of God as a material object.²⁹ Though both of these aspects are clearly present, the scene is even more important because of Tamburlaine’s conception of God as inextricably connected to vengeance. In fact, Tamburlaine’s burning of the Qu’ran designates revenge as proof of divinity; if “Mahomet” is God, He will bring “vengeance on the head of Tamburlaine” (5.1.193). Conquest is fueled by revenge and aided by a god of revenge. For a play that critics have often called atheistic, the last two sentences of Tamburlaine’s speech – “Seek out another godhead to adore / The God that sits in heaven, if any God, / For he is God alone and none but he” – affirms that God exists.³⁰ It is, perhaps, easy to misread the portion of the lines that say, “if any god” as an expression of doubt that God exists at all because the *Tamburlaine* plays overall, with their violence, and *Part II* with its religious oath breaking do not seem to affirm God’s existence. However, Tamburlaine is actually saying that if his followers are going to worship any God, they should worship the God that sits in Heaven. Tamburlaine

knows that he is the Scourge of God, but during the Qu'ran burning scene, he is hard put to identify the God behind his actions.

But to what end does Tamburlaine's speech affirm God's existence? Contrary to being an atheist or anti-Islamic or an iconoclast, Tamburlaine expresses a deep need to believe that he is on a divine mission; this coincides with his grandiosity, but it ironically also indicates the more important theme within the dramas depicting Islam of associating empire and conquest with the breakdown of justice, the absence of God, and the ubiquity of vengeance. The expressions of uncertainty about God's existence which can be located in *Part II* especially must not be separated from their imperial context. By burning the Qu'ran, Tamburlaine hopes to prove with certainty that God, particularly a vengeful God, supports his conquest of the world. By having this moment in which Tamburlaine questions which God's scourge he is, it introduces the possibility that he is no one's.

The only observable effect for audiences of the Qu'ran burning is that Tamburlaine feels "distempered suddenly" with "something" (5.1.216; 218). This significance of this effect is so ambiguous that critics are split about whether it is punishment from an Islamic God or a Christian God or just a natural illness and eventual death.³¹ The end of the play presents a physician who states in scientific detail the problems with Tamburlaine's body. And as a result, the play ultimately suggests that despite the English belief in a Scourge of God concept during the early modern period (epitomized by the Turks), conquest could in fact be godless – lacking in divine purpose even in terms of punishment for humanity's sinfulness.

Further, Tamburlaine leads up to the Qu'ran with a discussion of "Mahomet" and kin killing that is highly significant for the overall theme of the Islamic dramas.

In vain, I see, men worship Mahomet:
 My sword hath sent millions of Turks to hell,
 Slew all his priests, his kinsmen, and his friends,
 And yet I live untouched by Mahomet.
 There is a God full of revenging wrath,
 From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,
 Whose scourge I am, and him will I obey.

Tamburlaine's speaking of "Mahomet" in familial terms through a reference to his "kinsmen" on one level deflates "Mahomet," equating him with just another man who has family and friends. On another level, the mention of "kinsmen" is consistent with the overall concern of the dramas depicting Islam: the way that the building of imperial bonds destroys familial bonds in the process. God is commonly discussed in familial terms – God the father and the son and Mary Mother of God. That is one general reason why the dramas that depict Islam explore the justice of empire through the justice surrounding kin killing. Tamburlaine considers himself to have severed the kinship bonds for "Mahomet." Likewise, he finds himself responsible for having severed the bonds of friendship for "Mahomet." In the dramas depicting Islam, friendship is most often employed to describe non familial bonds either forged through the brute force of war and conquest such as Portugal in *The Spanish Tragedy* or Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* or won through magnificence in the case of Tamburlaine's friends Techelles, Theridamas, and Usumcasane. These friends of "Mahomet" mentioned in the passage are likely those converted to Islam through conquest. Tamburlaine observes that he has destroyed all of these bonds without repercussion from "Mahomet."

Between the Qu'ran burning and Tamburlaine's death is a scene of Callapine wishing to avenge his parents' death. Although the play has well dramatized the injustice of kin killing and Callapine's loyalty to his father is more admirable than Tamburlaine's disloyalty to his son Calyphas, we are still left with vengeance fueling the conquest cycle as the son of Bajazeth and son of Tamburlaine will continue where their parents left off. Like the other dramas depicting Islam, *Tamburlaine I* and *II* declare the injustice of empire by examining it through the merciless killing of children.

¹Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part One* and *Tamburlaine the Great, Part Two*, in *The Complete Plays: Christopher Marlowe*, ed. J.M. Dent (Rutland, Vermont, 2000), 2-147.

²For an in-depth discussion of early modern beliefs about "Mahomet" and the Qu'ran, see Matthew Dimmock, ed, Introduction to *William Percy's Mahomet and His Heaven*, (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

³I am following Carolyn Scott in noting the significance of consumption and self consumption in the play and its connection to conquest: she states that "in his hunger, Tamburlaine swallows up cities, kingdoms, and empires" (201-2). Drawing on work by Heather Blurton and Roy Battenhouse, she calls this connection between conquest and consumption a manifestation of "the Thyestean theme of tyranny" in which tyrants are imagined as cannibals consuming the people they have conquered (201-2). She also finds that Act 4, Scene 4 consists of three cannibalistic banquets, Procne's representing the destruction of posterity; Thyestes's signifying tyranny; and the Christian Eucharist, symbolic of redemption. Tamburlaine's power lies in his ability to absorb the destructive

force of Procne's and Thyestes's banquets and convert them into a redemptive wedding feast" (212). I depart with Scott on the subject of Tamburlaine's self destruction tendencies, as she states "Tamburlaine's outward directed destructiveness could lead to self-destruction as well, yet it does not" (212). I argue that Tamburlaine is already in the process of self consumption in Part One when he imprisons and starves his descendants, the Ottoman sultan and his wife. "Consuming Sorrow: Conversion and Consumption in *Tamburlaine: Part One*," in *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman*, ed. Sarah K. Scott and M.L. Stapleton (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 199-213.

⁴Giles Fletcher, *Of the Rus Commonwealth*, ed. Albert J. Schmidt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 99-100.

⁵Lisa Hopkins, *the Cultural Uses of the Caesars on the English Renaissance Stage* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 55-9.

⁶Patricia A. Cahill, *Unto the Breach: Martial Formations, Historical Trauma, and the Early Modern Stage*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 45.

⁷Roy W. Battenhouse writes about the significance of the phrase "Scourge of God" in "Tamburlaine, the 'Scourge of God'," *PMLA* 56, no. 2 (1941): 337-348.

⁸For further discussion of these two myths in Act 4 of *Part I*, see John Gillies, "Marlowe, the *Timur* Myth, and the Motives of Geography," in *Playing the Globe: Genre and Geography in English Renaissance Drama*, ed. John Gillies and Virginia Mason Vaughan, (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998), 203-229.

⁹In *the Generall Historie of the Turkes*, published in 1603, Richard Knolles writes about Mehmed II's murder of his brothers:

This young tyrant was no sooner possessed of his fathers kingdome, but that hee forgetting the lawes of nature, was presently in person himselfe about to haue murdered with his owne hands his youngest brother, then but eightene moneths old, begotten on the daughter of *Spoderbeius*. Which vnnaturall part, *Moses* one of his Bassaes, and a man greatly in his fauour, perceiuing, requested him not to imbrue his owne hands in the blood of his brother, but rather to commit the execution thereof to some other: which thing *Mahomet* commaunded him the author of that counsell forthwith to doe. So *Moses* taking the child from the nurse, strangled it, with pouring water downe the throat thereof. The young ladie vnderstanding of the death of her child (as a woman whom furie had made past feare) came, and in her rage reuiled the tyrant to his face, shamefully vpbraiding him for his inhumane crueltie. When *Mahomet* to appease her furie, requested her to be content, for that it stood with the policie of his state: and willed her for her better contentment, to aske whatsoever she pleased, and she should forthwith haue it. But she desiring nothing more than in some sort to be reuenged,* desired to haue *Moses* (the executioner of her sonne) deliuered vnto her, bound: which when she had obtained, she presently stricke him into the breast with a knife (crying in vaine vpon his vnthankfull master for helpe:) and proceeding in her cruell execution, cut an hole in his right side, and by peecemeale cut out his liues, and cast it to the dogs to eat. At the same time also he caused another of his brethren, committed by his father to the keeping of *Caly Bassa*, and now by him betrayed into his hands, to be likewise murdered.

Thus beginning his tyrannous raigne with the bloodie execution of them that were in blood nearest vnto him, and whom of all others he ought to haue defended, he presently after began to frame a new forme of a commonweale, by abrogating and altering the old lawes and customes, and publishing of new, better fitting his owne humour, and more commodious for himselfe: (337-8)

¹⁰ Ottoman historian John Kautsky quotes the Law of Fratricide: “whoever among my illustrious children and grandchildren may come to the throne, should, for securing the peace of the world, order his brothers to be executed. Let them hereafter act accordingly” in *the Politics of Aristocratic Empires*, (1982; reprint, with a new introduction by the author, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 243. Kautsky also discusses how the Law of Fratricide in practice involved killing any man who could possibly threaten

the sultan's power or the power of his presumed heir. It was not just brothers who were killed, 243.

¹¹Scott, 199-200.

¹²Scott, 199. See also John Parker, *the Aesthetics of Antichrist: from Christian Drama to Christopher Marlowe*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 183-245.

¹³Battenhouse, 343.

¹⁴ Battenhouse, 343.

¹⁵Battenhouse discusses some classical writing by Plutarch and Plotinus about the Scourge of God but states that "the concept has its truer origin, however, in the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah" in which the Assyrians scourge the Israelites, 337-8.

¹⁶Leah S. Marcus points out that "some of the historical chronicles available to Marlowe stressed Tamburlaine's violence against Christians, but in the plays that aggression is displaced on to Turks and Natolians," in "Epilogue: Marlowe *in Tempore Belli*," in *War and Words*, ed. Sara Munson Deats, Lagretta Tallent Lenker, and Merry G. Perry, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), 300.

¹⁷ Lisa Hopkins, *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 115.

¹⁸Hopkins writes that "his slaughter of the virgins of Damascus is of course an act of violence directed against those considered most holy by the Christian religion" in " 'Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might': *Tamburlaine* and Pastoral" *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 35 (1996): 1-16.

¹⁹Gillies posits that the *Tamburlaine* plays are caught between an Old Geography in which conquest is associated with "the ancient *traum* of incest, pollutiveness, entropy,

systems-collapse, and identity loss” and a New Geography that celebrates territorial expansion, 212. Additionally, Cahill finds a doubleness in the *Tamburlaine* plays’ exploration of military science in which the plays’ attention to large groups of men engaged in warfare moves the focus away from “bodies in pain” and also from a “theatre of cruelty” to a “theatre of abstraction,” 29.

²⁰Jonathan Burton maintains that in *Part One*, Marlowe characterizes Tamburlaine as European and a friend to Christians and in *Part Two*, he characterizes Tamburlaine as a Muslim. One piece of evidence for that consists of his sons who fulfill Turkish stereotypes of being bellicose and effeminate, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 73-82. Also, Matthew Dimmock contends that in *Part One*, Tamburlaine is “defined apart from all of the other ‘eastern’ characters in the play,” but in *Part Two*, he “assumes more of a barbarism that many earlier texts attribute to the Ottomans,” *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 155-6.

²²Burton argues that when viewing the scene of Calyphas’ being killed, the Renaissance audience would either have found themselves siding with Tamburlaine against the Turk or “in sympathy with the Turks whose misfortunes they are used to celebrating,” 85.

²³For further discussion of piracy and enslavement of Christians in the Mediterranean, see Claire Jowitt, ed. *Pirates?: The Politics of Plunder, 1550-1650*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslims Masters: White*

Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800, (Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

²⁴Marcus, 300. See also Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 55.

²⁵ Jeff Dailey provides the exact chronology of the Hungarians' battle with the Ottoman Empire in "Christian Underscoring in *Tamburlaine the Great Part Two*," *The Journal of Religion and Theatre* 4, no. 2 (2005): 148-149, 146-159.

²⁶Vitkus, 55; Burton, 65.

²⁷Hopkins, 115.

²⁸ Elizabeth Williamson, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern Drama*, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 188. Vitkus also acknowledges a critique of the centrality of the word in Protestantism in the Qu'ran burning scene, 52.

²⁹Williamson, 188 and Vitkus, 52.

³⁰For further discussion of this line of Tamburlaine's, see Daley, 159.

³¹ Stephen Greenblatt implies divine retribution in Tamburlaine's death when he states, "Tamburlaine falls ill, and when? When he burns the Koran!" *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980), 202.

Vitkus is perhaps a bit overemphatic when he states that "the conclusion of *Tamburlaine, Part II* shows that Tamburlaine's death is caused by a radically material disease of the body, and elemental imbalance that is not produced by anything physical above or beyond his own physical anatomy. Nowhere does the play suggest that his death is the result of divine retribution," 63. Daly states that "some directors and critics have tried to interpret the illness that afflicts Tamburlaine later in the scene as divine

retribution for his actions. While it may appear when reading a synopsis of the play that this is possible, in performance it is not. Had Tamburlaine been struck down while he was daring Mahomet and burning the Koran, this might be an imaginable interpretation, but that is not what happens. Tamburlaine finishes the burning and then listens to Techelles tell him about the massacre of the Babylonians, before becoming ill,” 158.

Patricide and Protestant Ascendancy in Non Canonical Dramas depicting Islam

Introduction

The issues of mercy and justice are used in the Islamic dramas to test borders surrounding nations, religions, races, and ethnicities: the dramas examine how mercy and justice operate within the borders of other nations and empires, and how they work to challenge borders or constrict them. In this chapter, I continue to focus on some of these dramas that feature the Islamic rulers' slaying or potential slaying of family members and lovers. As a paradigm of impartial justice, this action could be dated to classical texts. For example, Titus Livius, in *The History of Rome*, relates how Lucius Junius Brutus had to order the execution of his sons because they were plotting to place Tarquinius back in power and return Rome to a monarchy rather than a republic:

The traitors were condemned and punished, a punishment that was more conspicuous because the consulship imposed on a father the duty of inflicting the penalty on his sons. The one who should not have been a spectator was the very man whom fortune made the executioner. Young men of the highest birth stood bound to a stake. The consul's sons drew the eyes of all away from the others who became, as it were, anonymous. Men felt grief as much for the crime for which the youths were being deservedly punished as for the punishment itself. To think that in this year, above all others – when their fatherland had been liberated, their own father had been its liberator, and the consulship had begun with their own Junian family – to think that these young men could have conceived the intention of betraying the senators, plebs, and all the gods and men of Rome to a man who had formerly been a tyrannical king and was now an enemy exile.

The consuls proceeded to their seats and the lictors were dispatched to execute the sentence. The youths were stripped, scourged, and beheaded. Throughout the whole time, the gaze of everyone was directed to the expression on Brutus' face, which revealed his natural feelings as a father as the state's retribution was administered.¹

The sense here is that the killing was necessary for justice and preservation of the greater good, that the spectators are grieving, and that the father Brutus is as well. Niccolló Machiavelli draws on Livy when he uses the phrase "murdering the sons of Brutus" to signify that when new rulers take over a state, they should eliminate anyone who opposes them.² "The severity of Brutus was no less necessary than it was useful to preserve the freedom that he had gained for Rome. A father sitting in judgment and not merely condemning his sons to death but also present at their death is a rare example in the annals of history."³ Although this type of justice could be viewed favorably in classical texts, the dramas that depict Islam relegate this type of killing to cruel, tyrannical rulers rather than just rulers, so the classical paradigm has shifted within them.

Given that the phrase "turning Turk," signified a Christian's conversion to Islam and thus a turning from one's religion and one's nation, it is significant that a number of the dramas that depict Islam are preoccupied with people turning against those in their family or within their own group and the self destruction that results. For instance, in Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk* (1619), The Turkish captain Euronefes brings six Christian maidens captured from European victories to the sultan Amurath and tells him of the Christians that they fought: "so weary were they to indure our swords, / That by impetuous mutiny themselves, / Turn'd on each other; flew their Maisters; / Childrens own hands, tore out their fathers throats. / And each one strove who should be slaughtered first; / Here did a brother pash out a Brothers braines," (4.2.1225-30).⁴

This part demonstrates that the Turk is so detestable and so brutal to the Christians that self destruction is preferable to destruction by him, but it also establishes a perhaps unexpected congruence between the Turks and the Christians. This speech about Christians destroying one another problematizes an interpretation that suggests that audiences sought to be entertained by the Turks' demise at the hands of one another or as a result of their own misjudgments. Because dramatists were interested in form and in creating parallel actions in their dramas, dramatic convention could be setting up a parallel between self and other, which although it is about writing an effective drama could also align Muslims and Christians, Turks and Europeans, in an egalitarian fashion. This play demonstrates an English view that expanding an empire involves some degree of self destruction, whether that means Christians destroy one another in their desperation to avoid destruction by the Turk or that the Turk destroys his beloved or his own family to acquire more territory. The Ottoman sultan chooses, often in a way that appears immoral, among various family allegiances and sometimes withholds mercy from family members by controlling his emotions.

At the end of the play, when Bajazet succeeds Amurath as sultan, he sends for his brother Jacup and reminds him that Turkish law states that the son who becomes sultan must not allow the brother next in line to the sultanate to survive, so Jacup is killed; however, compared to the Christians' disordered turning on one another ("impetuous mutiny") Jacup resigns himself to his death, and it is ceremonial: Jacup ties one end of a scarf around his neck and gives the other end to Bajazet. Each pulls an end, and he is strangled. Yet in both situations, Christian or Muslim, people essentially destroy those of the same religion and even blood relatives. When the Christians kill one another, the play conveys a sense that they were driven to it by panic and fear

and that it is wrong. However, for the Muslim, it is merely a part of the mechanistic workings of justice and succession.

Two of the plays, *The Renegado* and *The Courageous Turk*, that I examine in this chapter feature the sultan Amurath I or Murad I (1362-89). After Murad came to power, he killed all of his brothers, which began a practice where each succeeding sultan also killed all of his brothers, the other contenders for the throne. This practice lasted about 200 years.⁵

This self destruction is closely connected to the sultan's control of his emotions, particularly the pity for his family members that would lead him to extend mercy to them and to spare their lives. Thus, the dramas that depict Islam examine the issue of how much the Ottoman sultan, sultan-like characters, or even Persian sultans (for this phenomenon is not necessarily confined within the plays to the Ottoman empire) can be affected by familial relationships and how impervious they are or should be to the emotional pleas of these family members. Keeping the passions in check in order to govern is a common theme running throughout other plays that have nothing to do with Muslims or sultans. But many of the dramas that depict Islam are different because they stage a scene in which the sultan's voracious acquisition of territory, the expansion of his empire which he believes to be his duty, requires him to slay his own family members. The repetition of the scene (and its variations) is notable because it demonstrates that the plays keep revolving around this set of issues to an even greater degree than other play genres.⁶ Of course, some of the returning to a certain set of issues results from the theater's repertory system and how playwrights repeated what was commercially successful in the past. Cumulatively, however, the repetitions communicate certain messages to audiences again and again and create and reinforce a habitual manner of imagining the Ottoman sultan among playwrights. And the commercial success of the first play that was later imitated by other

playwrights at other theaters may have occurred because it dramatized aspects of encounters with Muslims that resonated with English audiences' preconceived notions of foreign religions and empires.

The recurring scenes are those of pathos in which the sultan is confronted by family members who try to arouse his pity by invoking their familial relationships to him in the hopes that he will be merciful and spare them from death; these family members somehow interfere with the day-to-day governing or the expansion of the empire, making their deaths necessary; such scenes occur in *The Courageous Turk*, *The Raging Turk*, *The Renegado*, and *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*. A variation of this scene is the sultan who is too clement from the start, and it is his own sons who slay him to satiate their appetite for the throne and to keep the empire well governed and growing; this can be seen in Robert Greene's *Selimus*, yet *Selimus* also shows how self destruction paves the way for expansion of empire. I will not be discussing Fulke Greville's *Mustapha* and *Alaham* because they are closet plays, and I will treat only those plays performed for an audience, but their plots also are propelled by the extinguishing of family members' lives within the Ottoman royal family in order to gain imperial power.⁷ It is true that many of these plays are Ottoman history plays, and they are based on killings that did indeed happen within the Ottoman royal family. The Ottoman Empire did not structure the sultanate around a clear line of succession. When one sultan died, the family member, usually a son or brother, who could wrest power away from all the other contenders was considered to have been chosen by God to succeed as ruler. Bloody fratricides did happen. The English, however, did not stage these Ottoman histories in which family members kill one another just to portray what truly occurred in history. They served a specific function, and they were chosen. The English did not have to portray these events. The English knew that with empire came riches, which is pointed

out repeatedly in the plays, but the plays also explore the social costs of empire in terms of harmful cultural and religious effects and practices.

Sometimes plays repeat the scene of pity/mercy using characters who are not sultans and are not the sultan's family members such as the virgins who try to arouse Tamburlaine's pity and beg for mercy in *I Tamburlaine*. Yet another variation is the scene in which the sultan, sultan-like figure, or other character associated with Islam slays his beloved or his concubine, which occurs in *The Courageous Turk*, in Lodowick Carlell's *Osmond the Great Turk*, and also in the much more widely known, *Othello*.⁸ In this chapter, I will discuss *The Renegado*, *The Courageous Turk*, *Selimus*, and *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*. I will argue that these plays, even when they do not portray Protestantism directly on the stage, elevate Protestant concepts of mercy and forgiveness above those of Catholicism and of Islam, and in doing so, they create an argument against empire.

II

Before proceeding, a few words need to be said about the Reformation's effect on who was thought to represent God on earth and who was then able to grant mercy. The doctrine of the divine right of kings had existed in England prior to the early modern period and thus prior to the Protestant Reformation; the extent to which the monarch could justifiably exercise authority over Church officials and the Pope in Rome, as well as how much local officials, sacred or secular, could counter the monarch's authority was debated. While both Catholic priests and English monarchs were conceived as representing God, albeit in different capacities, the Catholic priest lost his legitimacy in post-Reformation England and was more likely to be considered as the incarnation of the Devil, alongside the Turk, according to Protestant writers such as John Foxe.⁹ This view resulted from King Henry VIII's rejection of the Papacy and establishment of himself

as head of the English clergy in 1532 and as Supreme Head of the Church of England in 1534. While priests interceded with God on behalf of sinners to obtain forgiveness, Protestantism did not hold that such human intervention was necessary to reconcile the sinner with God. However, the monarch, head of the Anglican church and according to the divine right of kings, anointed by God to serve as head of state, still played an important role in extending mercy to convicted criminals through the pardon.

In *Mercy and Authority in the Tudor State*, K.J. Kesselring argues that mercy and the pardon were valuable tools strategically used by the monarchs in the early modern period in order to obtain consent to their governance from English subjects.¹⁰ Early modern state formation consisted of “territorial expansion of the state, and the intensification and centralization of governance,” which the careful use of mercy and pardons facilitated.¹¹ He points out the mean that monarchs were meant to achieve in their use of mercy: “Clemency too rarely displayed denoted a tyrant; if too commonly shown, it degenerated into weak pity. Pardons given too often or to the wrong people might encourage further wrongdoing rather than grateful, deferential obedience.”¹² In addition, Kesselring writes that “the Tudors employed pardons to present themselves as God’s merciful justiciars.”¹³

God was certainly implied then in the monarch’s strategic use of the pardon, or rather in being the only person on earth who possessed the power to extend mercy and to save the criminal’s life, the monarch strengthened his or her status as a representative of God on earth. Thus, in England, the divine right of kings complicated the Protestant religious doctrine, arising from Martin Luther, of justification by faith alone rather than by faith and works (as in Catholicism). Although English Protestant doctrine espoused that no intercessor need come between the individual and God, in legal and governing practice, the monarch served as such an

intercessor when granting pardons. In a drama such as *The Renegado*, various facets of mercy and justice are explored, the theological and the legal, as mediated by the Catholic church and as mediated by the Ottoman state. The Catholic stance in which no path to mercy exists except through the Jesuit priest and through the performance of redemptive deeds is certainly critiqued in the play, yet the play also critiques Ottoman justice without mercy. And it is not just *The Renegado*, but the Islamic dramas in general that visit again and again the issue of how the Ottoman sultan, sultan-like figure, or Muslim character fail to achieve the necessary mean between justice and mercy that is required for governing effectively.

III: The Renegado:

The Renegado (1624) repeats the scene of mercy, justice, and pardon through different scenarios.¹⁴ Through its comedic undercutting of Catholicism and of Islam, the Protestant subtext of the play is that mercy received through God's grace is superior to Catholic and Islamic alternatives, which rely on the machinations of Jesuit priests and Ottoman sultans. Catholicism should not be interpreted merely as a proxy for Protestantism or as a generic Christianity creating a binary in relationship to Islam within the play. The Venetians should not be considered as simply stand-ins for the English either. To do so overlooks the play's critique of Catholicism that appears alongside its critique of Islam. I argue that Donusa's baptism at the end of *The Renegado* is not an unequivocal Christian triumph but a hasty, questionable baptism by a layperson and that the escape engineered for her and the Venetians by Francisco, the Jesuit priest, is a crafty, ignominious Catholic one that thwarts the proposed martyrdom upon which Vitelli's forgiveness rests. The concluding passage of the play demonstrates that at least the Moorish viceroy Asambeg accepts his punishment for his failure to administer Ottoman justice.

The Renegado creates a hierarchy in which both Catholicism and Islam are ranked by how far away they fall from the Protestant ideal of obtaining mercy and forgiveness directly through God. Islam falls away the furthest because it lacks any path to forgiveness in the play; Catholicism, however, demonstrates that it too is lacking the appropriate attitude toward mercy and forgiveness. The actions of Francisco, the good-natured Jesuit priest, who mediates all of the Catholic forgiveness in the play, expose Catholicism's deficiencies. Francisco becomes an interior director, similar to Iago in *Othello* or Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, only he is benevolent rather than malevolent. He directs the action largely by instructing his pupil Vitelli in Catholicism. The mercy and forgiveness Francisco offers rely on the penitents' charitable works instead of God's grace, and moreover, they also rely on his own intervention and plots. Often he is credited with the successes, and he and Vitelli calculate a path to martyrdom for the Italian gentleman. All of these traits and actions inevitably undercut the Catholic triumph at the end of the play when Vitelli, Donusa, and the rest of the Venetians, along with Donusa's Turkish retinue escape from Tunis. The last act of the play contains a lot of dialogue by Vitelli about the salvific power of Christianity and its superiority to Islam. Repeatedly, Vitelli lauds Christianity for erasing humans' fear of death. It is true that Christianity offered the promise of an eternal life to combat death. However, Vitelli and Francisco orchestrate a possible path to martyrdom for Vitelli, and then just when that martyrdom would seem to be inevitable because the Ottoman Empire's death sentence is to be carried out, Francisco helps Vitelli escape from prison, preventing a clear spiritual triumph of Christianity over Islam.

Francisco also must instruct Vitelli about the spiritual peril he is in because of sleeping with a Muslim woman: initially he is oblivious to it. When Vitelli first decides to visit Donusa, at her bidding, in the seraglio, he is so despondent over his sister Paulina's being held captive that

he does not care if she calls him there to have him killed, although he wonders if she might be able to help free Paulina. Donusa first sees Vitelli at the market, and she is attracted to him. She purposely breaks some of his merchandise and uses the pretext of compensating him to obtain a visit and then to convince him to sleep with her. By the time Vitelli leaves her, he is laden with riches that she has thrown at him as part of her repayment plan, “bags stuffed full of our imperial coin, [. . .] gems” (2.4.83-5).¹⁵ He is in good spirits, suffers no guilt for having slept with a Turk, and offers gold coin to his follower Gazet. He then proudly tells Francisco how his connection to Donusa and her wealth will help the priest to do good works: “There’s nothing / That can fall within the compass of your wishes / (Though it were to redeem a thousand slaves / From the Turkish galleys, or at home to erect / Some pious work to shame all hospitals), / But I am master of the means” (2.6.30-34). Francisco is both “amazed” but also concerned, so he instructs Vitelli about the danger he is in: “They steer not the right course, nor traffic well, that seek a passage to reach heaven through hell” (2.6.45-6).

This instruction occurs during confession, of which in keeping with its private nature, the audience does not hear the substance. However, before Vitelli’s Catholic confession, the audience does hear a parallel Islamic confession: Mustapha, Donusa’s suitor, is sure that she has lost interest in him because of some other man, and he forces Manto, at swordpoint, to reveal to him that she has lost her virginity, as he suspects, and he tells her, “I cherish thy confession, thus, and thus,” as he rewards her with jewels. He then proclaims that Donusa is a “land crocodile / Made of Egyptian slime,” (3.1.90-1) or in other words, a hypocrite.

The play moves straight from this “confession” to Vitelli’s “sir, as you are my confessor,” directed at Francisco. His confession of his sexual liaison with Donusa affords Francisco the opportunity to show him how he errs, and he tells Francisco, “I would not appear

an hypocrite” (3.2.6); although a vague line, since we are not privy to the confession, it likely refers to the hypocrisy of being a Catholic in an intimate physical relationship with a Muslim, or even more likely, wanting to use the money he receives from her to offer Catholic charity to the world. Unlike Grimaldi whom I will discuss later, Vitelli is not stricken with guilt here. He does not concern himself with internal states and the status of his soul but external appearances, such as to “appear an hypocrite.” His request for Francisco’s “pardon” is casual, as though he has done little wrong because he claims it is natural for a man to feel physically tempted by a woman like Donusa: “But when you impose / A penance on me beyond flesh and blood / To undergo, you must instruct me how / To put off the conditions of a man; or if not pardon, at the least, excuse / My disobedience” (3.2.6-11). After his confession, he is still arguing about excuses for his deeds and that he cannot be held fully accountable due to the weakness of a man’s flesh. Rather than being sincerely sorry and being forgiven through God’s grace, Vitelli assures Francisco that he will offer many good deeds to counteract his bad ones: “Yet despair not, sir; / For though I take mine own way, I shall do / Something that may hereafter, to my glory, / Speak me your scholar” (3.2.11-14). These deeds will glorify both him and Francisco, which is not exactly self abasing concern with how he has sinned. Francisco does not want him to stage such an elaborate atonement, “I enjoin you not / To go, but send” (3.2.13-14), meaning that Vitelli should not go to Donusa because the temptation will be too great. Instead, if he needs to encounter her again as part of his plan, he should send for her to come to him, a suggestion at which Vitelli scoffs, “That were a petty trial, / Not worth one so long taught and exercised / Under so grave a master. Reverend Francisco [. . .] / Rest confident you shall hear something of me / That will redeem me in your good opinion / Or judge me lost for ever” (3.2.) He imagines Francisco’s absolute judgment against him unless he redeems himself with charitable acts. Thus,

the plot of *The Renegado* is largely propelled by the needs of Catholics to do good deeds as recompense for prior actions, for Vitelli's penance brings him back into Donusa's presence, which in turn allows others to discover that he is the man to whom Donusa lost her virginity. And in a sense, it almost seems as though Vitelli expected to be caught by going to Donusa, as I will address later.

Scene 5 takes place between Vitelli and Donusa in Donusa's section of the palace in an "inner room," which connotes the mystery and exoticism of the seraglio, the kind of temptation that Vitelli wished to undergo to redeem himself to Francisco. In this scene, Vitelli stands in contrast to his nonchalance over his sin in his encounter with Francisco because he has swung to the other extreme of hyperbolic denunciation of his sin, a denunciation which mainly consists of condemning Donusa for being such a temptress: "And holy thoughts and resolutions arm me / Against this fierce temptation / Give me voice, / Tuned to a zealous anger, to express / At what an overvalue I have purchased / The wanton treasure of your virgin bounties / That in their false fruition heap upon me / Despair and horror" (3.5.39-44). Vitelli has purposely gone to visit Donusa in order to demonstrate to Francisco that he can now resist (sexual) temptation, where before he willingly relinquished himself, and to be pardoned as a result of facing and resisting the temptation. Interestingly, his resistance to Donusa places him in a position similar to the sultan or the viceroy who needs to ignore an emotional plea in order to be just or moral. He denies mercy and pity to Donusa at an appropriate time in order to save himself from sexual temptation. Donusa asks him,

Are you marble?

If Christians have mothers, sure they share in

The tigress' fierceness, for if you were owner

Of human pity, you could not endure
 A princess to kneel to you, or look on
 These falling tears which hardest rocks would soften
 And yet remain unmoved. (3.5.73-79)

This scene echoes other scenes in which a woman begs for her life from the Ottoman sultan, but here it is much less moving because Donusa is begging for Vitelli to continue his relationship with her. It hearkens back to the pity and mercy that Vitelli has recently received from Francisco, which he now denies to Donusa. It also prefigures Donusa's much more serious speeches for mercy when she fights for her life.

Vitelli returns to Donusa's palace because he ultimately wants to arrange for his own martyrdom in order to bring glory upon himself and Francisco. This is evident in the ensuing scenes, because being caught in the palace with Donusa affords him just such an opportunity. When Asambeg and Mustapha rush in to overhear that the two have slept together and to seize them for punishment, Vitelli exclaims, "The better – I expected / A Turkish faith" (3.5.87-8). This exclamation could easily be overlooked, but if it is understood that Vitelli had no need to return to Asambeg's palace where Donusa resides except to glorify himself and Francisco, in the name of repentance through Catholic good deeds, and by staging a mock scene of temptation and resistance/fortitude, then the exclamation takes on new resonance. He finds it "better" that he has been caught, and he indeed expected "a Turkish faith," or in other words, he not only expected to be caught (and who wouldn't when speaking in the viceroy's palace?) but he also thinks it better that he has been caught.

If we return to Francisco, who is also part of the plotting, we see that he, disguised in a bishop's habit, pardons Grimaldi the renegade; he is then excited about the possible results of his own actions toward Grimaldi and Vitelli and how he will be glorified for helping them both: "My travail's to meet with a double crown: / If that Vitelli come off safe and prove / Himself the master of his wild affections" (4.1.130-132). Francisco, from the start, approves of Vitelli's plan to test himself with Donusa; it is just that he requested a less stringent test in which Vitelli did not encounter Donusa on her own turf but on his where he would be in greater control. However, he sees Vitelli's mastering of his affections in Donusa's physical presence as part of his own labor in teaching Vitelli religious precepts, in convincing him of his error of sleeping with her, and in showing him the way to obtain mercy and redemption. He calls Vitelli his "loved pupil" (4.1.148). When Gazet brings him the news that Vitelli is in prison, he tells Gazet, "We must think now, / Though not to free, to comfort sad Vitelli" (4.1.157-8). It is significant here that Francisco claims to have no plans to free Vitelli because at the end of the play, he does devise a plan to free him. It is as though he allows Vitelli to suffer for a certain amount of time as penance.

At this point, the play begins to create the possibility of two martyrdoms – a Catholic and Islamic, Vitelli's and Donusa's. The "decree of our great prophet Mahomet" (4.2.148) arrives in a black box sent by the sultan from Istanbul, and it states that Donusa must die or else must persuade the Christian man to convert to Islam. Before the decree is read, all, including Donusa herself, believe that the punishment will be immediate death, and Donusa implores Asambeg to be brought to Amurath's "presence" (4.2.98) so that she can "allege / Such reasons in mine own defense or plead / So humbly (my tears helping) that it should / Awake his sleeping pity" (4.2.99-102). Donusa wishes to arouse his pity toward her, but it is deemed impossible by

Asambeg who is ruling the distant colony and must keep order himself while minimizing the involvement of the sultan. Therefore, Donusa must use her pleas on Asambeg, the sultan's representative: Were she present in front of Amurath,

I would thus then
 First kneel and kiss his feet, and after, tell him
 How long I had been his darling; what delight
 My infant years afforded him; how dear
 He prized his sister in both bloods, my mother;
 That she, like him, had frailty that to me
 Descends as an inheritance; then conjure him,
 By her blest ashes and his father's soul,
 The sword that rides upon his thigh, his right hand
 Holding the scepter and the Ottoman fortune,
 To have compassion on me. (4.2.104-114)

This speech depicts a loving family relationship among Donusa, her mother, and Amurath. The speech can only be lost on Asambeg who is not Donusa's blood relative and whose purpose is to administer the sultan's judgment, which consists of "Mahometan" law or the law of the "Alcoran," unmediated by any calls, no matter how compelling, for familial compassion.

Asambeg does state before the pseudo-trial begins that although Donusa will appear pitiable in the black garments that she is forced to wear to the event, "in justice, I dare not pity" (4.2.6-7). Thus, *The Renegado's* plot critiques the problematic distance between the ruler and the ruled that does not allow for arguments such as Donusa's to be heard by those for whom they would have

maximum impact. The black box itself connotes that the workings of empire are secret and closed; once the box opens to reveal the law, that law is unyielding.

In a metatheatrical moment that will be echoed with Vitelli, Paulina watches on as Donusa takes part in the Ottoman version of a trial. Asambeg informs her that Donusa has disgraced herself by yielding her chastity and that Paulina could learn a lesson from her punishment (4.3.38-40), and Paulina wants to observe the proceedings. Although she yielded sexually, Donusa does not want to yield to her punishment, and she argues vehemently in her own defense about the gender inequality of the Ottoman system. She is convincingly and righteously angry about the double standard, within the world of the play, that permits Ottoman men to seek sexual pleasure but not the women. If her punishment though was decided before she expresses any emotion at all, then she does not need to be viewed as a bold woman for angrily speaking out to male authority. She dies if she does, and she dies if she does not speak out. Her boldness can be seen instead as she decides to exercise her one option for survival – converting Vitelli to Christianity. Asambeg's and Mustapha's reaction to this decision indicates that it is disgraceful because it avoids the path of a kind of Islamic martyrdom for Donusa. For instance, Mustapha exclaims, "O base! / Can fear to die make you descend so low / From your high birth and brand the Ottoman line / With such a mark of infamy?" (4.3.160-63), and Asambeg, "Think of your honor: / In dying nobly, you make satisfaction / For your offense, and you shall live a story / of bold, heroic courage" (4.3.170-173). She is going to forego living the story of bold, heroic courage in her Muslim society, the story that Vitelli embraces and arranges for himself within Catholicism.

While Paulina has watched the justice meted out to Donusa as though it were a play, Vitelli refers to the staging of his impending martyrdom from his jail cell with Francisco present. Francisco raves with pride over Vitelli's imprisonment and upcoming death:

O my dearest pupil!
 Witness these tears of joy! I never saw you,
 Till now, look lovely; nor durst I ever glory
 In the mind of any man I had built up
 With the hands of virtuous and religious precepts
 Till this glad minute. Now you have made good
 My expectation of you. By my order,
 All Roman caesars, that led kings in chains
 Fast bound to their triumphant chariots, if
 Compared with that true glory and full luster
 You now appear in, all their boasted honors
 Purchased with blood and wrong would lose their names
 And be no more remembered! (4.3.8-19)

Francisco holds himself, rather than God, accountable for showing Vitelli the virtuous path. He glories in what he has achieved through building Vitelli up, and notably he compares Vitelli's glory to the military exploits of Roman emperors. The OED cites "caesar" as a word applied to all emperors until the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, so the play is elevating contemporary Catholic Rome above classical pagan Rome, but it is also invoking an empire that preceded the Ottomans, and in speaking of its glory and triumph, it is elevating the ancient Roman empire

above the current Ottoman.¹⁶ The result is that Catholicism rhetorically assumes the pinnacle of greatness, but its contenders for that title are not other religions but empires. Such contenders and such a contest diminish the greatness of Vitelli's Catholic martyrdom in spite of how Francisco attempts to exalt it. Cumulatively, the speech focuses on Francisco's greatness in teaching Vitelli and the honor that facing his death will bring Vitelli and compares these to martial honor; while appropriately, the focus should be on God and his greatness, the focus rests on the personal greatness of these two men in comparison to the personal greatness of pagan emperors, which undercuts Catholicism and demonstrates that it is aligned with Islam in this play, that this play would not be viewed as the triumph of Christianity over Islam but as the alignment of Catholicism and Islam in which both have their focus simultaneously in the wrong place – on man's glory and power.

This is proven then by how Asambeg and Mustapha admire Vitelli so much. Asambeg is not interested in a Christian God, but he admires Vitelli's honor in confronting his death. Asambeg and Mustapha laud Vitelli several times, but one instance by Asambeg truly reveals the way that this admiration is about the earthly qualities of the man, which is highlighted when Asambeg compares Grimaldi and Vitelli to one another and contends that Grimaldi lacks strength within himself: "There weigh the difference / In the true temper of their minds. The one, / A pirate sold to mischiefs, rapes, and all / That makes a slave relentless and obdurate, / Yet of himself wanting the inward strengths / That should defend him, sinks beneath compassion / Or pity of a man; whereas this merchant, / Acquainted only with a civil life, / Armed in himself, entrenched and fortified / With his own virtue, valuing life and death / At the same price – poorly – does not invite / A favor, but commands us do him right (5.3.31-42). Both Francisco and

Asambeg admire Vitelli for the same reasons, because of his fortitude in facing death without complaint, which aligns the perspectives of Catholics and Muslims.

After Francisco tells Vitelli how much he admires him, then Vitelli compares his approval to the approval of a theater audience: “This applause / Confirmed in your allowance joys me more / Than if a thousand full-crammed theaters / Should clap their eager hands to witness that / The scene I act did please, and they admire it” (4.3.20-25). Vitelli’s imprisonment and martyrdom are elaborately orchestrated Catholic good works arranged by him and Francisco. Vitelli does acknowledge God’s role in resisting his lust for Donusa: “I grant to have mastered / The rebel appetite of flesh and blood / Was far above my strength and still owe for it / To that great power that lent it” (4.3.26-29). Yet he continues to credit Francisco just as much: when he can “hast[en] to my martyrdom as to a heavenly banquet, / To which I was a choice invited guest; / Then you may boldly say you did not plough / Or trust the barren and ungrateful sands / With the fruitful grain of your religious counsel” (4.3.34-38). He has planned his martyrdom, and it will reflect well on Francisco, conferring greatness upon both of them.

The next scene that demonstrates how *The Renegado* undercuts Catholicism is the one in which Vitelli asks Francisco’s permission to baptize Donusa. The situation is odd because the play makes a point to emphasize how Asambeg would not permit Francisco to be close enough to Vitelli’s pre-execution wedding to baptize her (5.1.26-31). It might seem logical that the Moorish viceroy would not want a Catholic priest in his palace. However, no previous scenes have mentioned anything about Asambeg’s attitude toward Francisco, so the play has not prepared audiences for the “necessity” (5.1.29) that Vitelli baptize Donusa. I would argue that the play emphasizes baptism performed by a lay person in order to deflate the triumph of Catholicism in the play and to align it more closely with Islam. The moral superiority of

Catholicism is not clear and unarguable. Francisco responds by pointing out that “midwives upon necessity, perform [baptism]” (5.1.33-4).

As with any sacrament in Post-Reformation England, the views on baptism were debated contentiously. According to David Cressy, some Protestants would have it that “haste in baptism, and baptism by midwives show a belief in popish doctrine.”¹⁷ Donusa’s baptism is hasty, if nothing else. When Vitelli receives consent from Asambeg to his vague request to “perform it / But in the fashion which we Christians use / Upon the like occasions,” he exclaims to Gazet, his servant, “my service: haste, Gazet, to the next spring / And bring me of it” (5.3.92-4; 96-7). The stage directions state that Gazet reenters “with water” and that Vitelli, after a brief speech, “throws [water] on her face,” at which point she miraculously, “feel[s] the films of error / Ta’en from my soul’s eyes” (5.3.123-5). It is unclear that Protestant audiences would be comfortable with this quick baptism by a layman and that they would not dispute its validity. Also problematic is how the baptism occurs in an atmosphere permeated by appearances and seeming. Vitelli and Donusa seem to be heading to their deaths, but the play has foreshadowed in a few previous scenes that they are likely close to being rescued, something that the audience will have intuited and Paulina knows, even as she watches what takes place. After Donusa has converted to Christianity so suddenly, Paulina seems suddenly to convert to Islam: “I will turn Turk” (5.3.151). Thus, this is not an unequivocal Catholic triumph. It is rather a troubling alignment between Catholicism and Islam. Both can be put on and off quickly and for strategic reasons. The play does not offer evidence that Donusa is a faux convert. However, Vitelli’s insistence on having her convert still plays a role in winning an additional soul to the Catholic fold and thus augments the martyrdom he has strategically placed himself in the position to achieve.

At the end of Act 5, Scene 1, Francisco validates Vitelli's desire to "rise a blest martyr" (45-6), and it appears that all will follow the scheduled plan. Yet the following scene has him providing instructions to Grimaldi in a scroll about readying matters for his departure and then giving Paulina a paper and hoping "that the viceroy's extreme dotage on you / May be the parent of a happier birth / Than yet our hopes dare fashion" (5.2.87-9). Francisco's words hint obliquely at God's grace and a miracle – "since what above is proposed, is inscrutable" – although he makes elaborate plans through his own agency. In a pagan sounding address, he denies any self aggrandizing motives in his plot and declares them religious, "Prosper, thou great Existence, my endeavors, / As they religiously are undertaken / And distant equally from servile gain" (5.2.43-45). However, these words are later negated by Vitelli who credits his entire escape from death to Francisco himself:

O best of men! He that gives up himself
 To a true religious friend leans not upon
 A false deceiving reed but boldly builds
 Upon a rock, which now with joy I find
 In reverend Francisco, whose good vows,
 Labors, and watchings in my hoped-for-freedom
 Appear a pious miracle. I come,
 I come, good man, with confidence. Though the descent
 Were steep as hell, I know I cannot slide,
 Being called down by such a faithful guide

Suddenly the audience hears that Vitelli has been hoping for the possibility of freedom, despite having in many ways facilitated his death sentence by going to Donusa in the palace in the first place and for believing that he needed to undertake deeds to counteract his having slept with her instead of just being forgiven by God. And not only does he undertake deeds but he also, once caught, delights in the idea of being a martyr for the exaltation it would bring to him. The verb “appear” precedes “a pious miracle,” which resonates with the previous scene’s seeming. One would have expected the last sentence in particular, as it is about Vitelli’s faithful guide that protects him, to refer to God, but instead, it refers to Francisco. Finally, the fact that the play has pushed for martyrdom all the way through and has discussed Vitelli’s courage in facing his death but his foray into martyrdom ends in this deflating moment of descending down the side of the castle on a rope ladder is telling of more than its genre. It is also telling of the critique of Catholicism taking place, how it cannot be morally elevated above Islam, how impending martyrdom is thwarted and pushed into ignominious escape, and all the while how the Catholic priest elides God in the acts of mercy, forgiveness, justice, miracles, and deliverance.

After having traced the main plot that consists of Francisco-Vitelli-and-Donusa, I would like to return to mercy and forgiveness in the play’s subplot with Francisco and Grimaldi and in the subplot with Asambeg and the Ottoman sultan in order to demonstrate that a similar critique of Catholic mercy through good works occurs at multiple levels in the play. After the viceroy of Tunis, Asambeg, confiscates all of Grimaldi’s goods, Grimaldi becomes dejected. His dejection is first undercut because Gazet (Vitelli’s servant) tells Francisco why Grimaldi is so disturbed: “Why he’s cashiered, sir. / His ships, his goods, his livery punks, confiscate; / And there is such a punishment laid upon him! / The miserable rogue must steal no more, / Nor drink, nor drab” (3.2.40-44). Thus, it is his loss of wealth gained by piracy and his inability to continue drinking

and whoring that bothers him, according to Gazet. Grimaldi denies that grace can absolve him of his sins:

Why should I study a defense or comfort,
 In whom black guilt and misery, if balanced,
 I know not which would turn the scale? Look upward
 I dare not; for should it but be believed
 That I (dyed deep in hell's most horrid colors)
 Should dare to hope for mercy, it would leave
 No check or feeling in men innocent
 To catch at sins the devil ne'er taught mankind yet.
 No, I must downward, downward! Though repentance
 Could borrow all the glorious wings of grace,
 My mountainous weight of sins would crack their pinions
 And sink them to hell with me. (3.2.61-72)

Grimaldi's idea that he cannot hope for any mercy sounds anti-Protestant because it denies God's grace that is given but need not be earned.

We later learn that his guilt arises not from the confiscation of his goods (or perhaps only in part from that); he is revisited by memories of his offense years ago when the government officials and other Venetians were walking to St. Mark's church to be absolved of their sins, and he "ran to the holy man / As he was doing of the work of grace, / And, snatching from his hands the sanctified means, / Dashed it upon the pavement" (4.1.30-33). For Catholics, throwing the Eucharist on the pavement is a mortal sin. He has already forsaken the Protestant notion of

mercy coming directly from God, but he also does not want his mercy and forgiveness mediated by the Jesuit priest Francisco because he believes that “he cannot receive pardon for this foul fact but from his hands against whom / It was committed” (4.1.41-2). Grimaldi is trapped in an Old Testament “eye for an eye” (4.1.60) justice mentality, which is in keeping with his tendency to dismember and destroy bodies, be they the body of Christ or the bodies of his fellow drunkards in barroom brawls: “Yet to find peace within here, / Though all such as I have maimed and dismembered / In drunken quarrels, or o’ercome with rage / When they were given up to my power, stood here now / And cried for restitution; to appease ‘em / I would do a bloody justice on myself: / Pull out these eyes that guided me to ravish / Their sight from others; lop these legs that bore me / To barbarous violence; with this hand cut off / This instrument of wrong; till nought were left me / But this poor bleeding limbless trunk, which gladly / I would divide among them.” (4.1.61-72). This speech atones for his defilement and dismemberment of the body of Christ. Grimaldi’s idea then of how he can obtain pardon pre-dates the coming of Christ, in its invoking of the Old Testament, and it is literal, enacting upon him exactly what he enacted upon others. It sounds like atheism because it looks not to God but only to himself to rectify the situation.

Since Grimaldi believes he can only be forgiven by the bishop whom he wronged, it is convenient that Francisco is precisely that bishop as he lets the audience know in Act 1, Scene 1 (110-11). After “pronounc[ing]” that he has forgiven (4.1.82) Grimaldi, the renegade is incredulous and wonders if “a pardon e’er may find me?” (4.1.86), but Francisco assures him with a Catholic vision of grace through good works that would not rest easily with Protestant audiences, “Purchase it / By zealous undertakings, and no more / ‘Twill be remembered” (4.1.87-89). Grimaldi embraces his newfound calling to do penance through charitable works and

proclaims that he will persuade as many Muslims to adopt the Christian faith as he has previously sold Christians into slavery under the Muslims (4.1.90-110): “Can good deeds redeem me? / I will rise up a wonder to the world” (4.1. 96-7). Can we interpret Grimaldi’s move from believing that mercy is impossible to believing that his good deeds will redeem him as a complete salvation? Not necessarily. Hyperbole characterizes his statement about his becoming a wonder to the world. Hubris characterizes his later statement that he “will truly labor, that good men / May say hereafter of me to my glory / (Let but my power and means stand with my will), / ‘His good endeavors did weigh down his ill’” (4.1.124-127): He is thinking of his own glory and greatness that will arise from his future of good deeds rather than of God’s greatness. The play critiques Francisco’s and Grimaldi’s focus on works for mercy and forgiveness, and although Francisco is certainly a sympathetic character and not a villain, his Catholic path toward mercy is undercut in the play. Therefore, *The Renegado* has Protestant sensibilities and a Protestant critique of Catholic conceptions of mercy and forgiveness. Grimaldi is reformed to some degree after his encounter with Francisco: it is preferable that he embark on a mission to convert Muslims to Christianity than to enslave his fellow Christians, but it would be even better for him to recognize that God’s grace not his own doing will bring about his pardon.

Mercy and forgiveness comprise a substantial part of the subplot surrounding Asambeg, the viceroy of Tunis. While Grimaldi’s path toward mercy results in a partial improvement in his spiritual beliefs, the path toward mercy is closed for Asambeg. He has no spiritual path, and the only path the play allows for mercy travels through the Ottoman sultan who is depicted as immovable and dispassionate, unaffected by emotions and pleas for mercy. Related to mercy, the important point about the Ottoman sultan in this play is that he is aligned with the Judeo-Christian Old Testament God of law and retribution; thus, one Venetian character Grimaldi

literally evinces Old Testament justice beliefs, and the Ottoman sultan figuratively does. When Asambeg is confronting Grimaldi about how he lost one of the ships in the Tunisian harbor to Maltese pirates, Asambeg talks about how he is a conduit for Amurath's orders, that his power derives from Amurath and thus he should be obeyed – "In me great Amurath spake! / My voice did echo to your ears his thunder / And willed you, like so many sea-born tritons, / Armed only with the trumpets of your courage, / To swim up to her and (like remoras / Hanging upon her keel) to stay her flight" (2.5.33-39).

During this confrontation between Grimaldi and Asambeg, Grimaldi speaks of the sultan's power in a disparaging rather than reverent manner, and Asambeg responds in a way that foreshadows the revelation of Grimaldi's offense of throwing the Eucharist to the ground: "Villain, I'll make thee know / Thou hast blasphemed the Ottoman power, and safer / At noonday might have given fire to St. Mark's, your proud Venetian temple" (2.5.77-80). The language connotes religious transgression – blasphemed – and Grimaldi's verbal insults about the sultan are an attack on God and the sacred similar to setting fire to the Catholic church in Venice. Perhaps Asambeg's uncanny mentioning of St. Mark's just before stripping him of his goods is another reason for Grimaldi's subsequent guilt and misery; the remark must hit too close to home and seem tinged by the supernatural ability to know his deeds, considering that the play does not suggest at any point that Asambeg knew what Grimaldi had done at St. Mark's.

The play construes the Ottoman sultan as a mediator of mercy and justice, much like the Catholic priest Francisco. However, since he is geographically displaced, the problematic nature of the Ottoman sultan's susceptibility to feeling pity in the face of pleas for mercy is eliminated in *The Renegado* and is displaced on to the viceroy, Asambeg. In *The Renegado*, the Ottoman sultan Amurath is not undone by his emotions because he never appears on stage at all, although

Asambeg his representative does allow his emotions to interfere with his government of Tunis, the part of the empire of which he has been entrusted. However, Asambeg manages to keep his pity under control. He has a greater problem controlling his admiration for Vitelli: “Yet Christian, in reward of thy brave courage, / Be thy faith right or wrong, receive this favor: / In person I’ll attend thee to thy death / And boldly challenge all that I can give, / But what’s not in my grant, which is – to live” (4.3.162-66). This admiration represents a weakness in the tight government of the Ottoman colony because although he cannot grant Vitelli his life, he does grant that he can marry Donusa before they are both put to death. Thus, his positive regard for Vitelli delays the execution to wed a couple and introduces opportunities for Francisco to plan to prevent the execution.

His other significant problem with controlling his emotions in order to govern the colony relates to his sexual desire for Paulina, the Christian virgin whom he holds captive. His interactions with Paulina emasculate him and strip him of his resolution to govern Tunis effectively. He says that she “robs me of the fierceness I was born with? / Stout men quake at my frowns, and in return / I tremble at her softness” (2.5.108-9). He can only allow himself to come into her presence for a few moments lest she strip him completely of his ability to lead the colony, which is construed as a fierceness or roughness that frightens others: “This devotion paid / to this sweet saint, mistress of my sour pain, / ‘Tis fit I take my own rough shape again” (2.5.163-5). His words sound Catholic – paying devotion to a sweet saint – yet the language of religious transformation describes a transformation in Asambeg’s governing power. Therefore, Asambeg, the sultan’s rather inept representative in Tunis, needs to self-govern the passions in order to govern others.

Asambeg's frightening demeanor is more illusion or self-delusion than reality though because characters such as Grimaldi and Donusa argue with him and show anger; they are not fearful enough to cower in his presence, even when he is handing out death sentences. This open display of anger to the viceroy contrasts significantly with the other plays in which characters cry and plead for their lives. Genre can account for some of the contrast. Because *The Renegado* is so comedic in general, the scenes of tearful pathos would be out of place in it. The angry scenes though, particularly Donusa's railing against the double-standard for Ottoman women's sexual behavior compared to men sound convincing and not comedic. Perhaps the open display of anger in the face of imperial power is more plausible for the playwright to depict when the character used is not Amurath himself but only a Moorish representative. The English playwrights may not have been able to conceive of a subject arguing directly with the Ottoman sultan himself.

At the end of the play, Asambeg's emotions for Paulina finally cause him to err in his decision. He allows her to persuade him to postpone Vitelli's and Donusa's execution an additional 12 hours. This postponement affords her time to enable everyone's escape. He knows that his loss of control of the empire will bring about the displeasure of the sultan, and he speaks woefully after being made known of his error in government:

O my credulity! I am too full
 Of grief and rage to speak. Dull, heavy fool,
 Worthy of all the tortures that the frown
 Of thy incensed master can throw on thee!
 Without one man's compassion, I will hide
 This head among the deserts, or some cave
 Filled with my shame and me, where I alone

May die without a partner in my moan. (5.8.32-290)

This speech is notable for how it fails to mention significant punishment from the sultan let alone violent punishment. No doubt the sultan will be “incensed” at what happens, but Asambeg describes a mild reaction: he will “frown” at Asambeg and Asambeg will lose his “compassion.” Asambeg’s punishment is self-punishment in this speech. He feels the grief and rage against himself that one might imagine the sultan would feel. Because of shame, he will hide himself away until he dies, showing that he has internalized the standards of the Ottoman sultan and will be the arbiter of his own punishment. Shame operates in him in contrast to the guilt that Grimaldi felt over his misdeeds, guilt being the more Christian emotion, as it is internal between God and the self. At the same time and in keeping with the Ottoman sultan’s connection to an Old Testament God, Asambeg’s speech is marked by the absence of a path to mercy and forgiveness for him. However, it is notable that while Vitelli and Donusa escape their punishment after all, the Moor Asambeg turns out to be the only person to accept his.

III: Selimus

Another instance of the mercy scene and of the killing of family members, but in this case, one in which a son slays a father, occurs in Robert Greene’s *Selimus* (1592). *Selimus* dramatizes an intrafamilial feud over the throne among Bajazet, the reigning sultan, and his three sons Corcut, Acomat, and Selimus, Selimus and Acomat being the sons most covetous of the throne. At the end of Scene 1, when Bajazet receives word that Selimus has arrived with thousands of troops, he states, “Ah Selim, Selim, wert thou not my son / But some strange unacquainted foreigner, / Whom I should honor as I honored thee; / Yet would it grieve me even unto death / If he should deal as thou hast dealt with me” (1.208-212).¹⁸ Bajazet’s words

juxtapose his blood relative, his son, with “some strange unacquainted foreigner.” These words are significant because they show how maintaining power over an empire’s boundaries renders the boundary surrounding the family mutable by severing family connections and causes family members to behave as Other – as foreigners. Selimus’s ending soliloquy, to which I will return later, establishes a temporal sequence in which first “the Ottoman family” is destroyed as a prerequisite to destroying foreign empires. He starts with the family, the self, and moves outward to others. The English view of the empire building of the Ottomans is predicated on this sequence of events.

Bajazet, rather than being unmoved by his emotional connections to his sons and other family members, errs on the side of excessive feeling toward them. Thus, in this drama, the scene mustering the ruler’s pity focuses not on the sultan but on one of the sultan’s sons, Acomat, who decides to forsake his dallying with the art of love for the art of war and join the battle over his father’s throne. He believes that his father should have given the throne over to him because Selimus has proven so false by plotting against Bajazet. He proclaims that he too will sever family connections and basically become a more extreme version of the “unacquainted foreigner” of whom his father previously spoke. The foreigner earlier imagined is one from whom Bajazet had no reason to suspect ill designs, just as he presumably had no reason to suspect ill from Selimus and one whom Bajazet should honor for whatever political reasons but who surprises him with injurious acts. Acomat, however, wants to act “not like a son, but a most cruel foe” (10.37); the foreigner then evolves as the play progresses into one no longer deserving of honor, from a potential friend to an obvious foe.

Acomat warms up to his martial exploits by deciding to kill his nephew Mahomet and his niece Zonara, the decision no doubt fostered by envy because these two are the son and daughter

of the deceased Alemshae, Bajazet's favorite son. When Zonara begs for his pardon, he tells her, "no, minion, you are too near a kin to me" (12.67): The nearer the kinship relation, the more the characters in the plays feel threatened about losing the throne because they believe that their relatives may be emotionally closer to the sultan, that these relatives may be the sultan's favorite, and be granted the crown by him or that they may feel entitled to the crown due to their close kinship. Zonara asks Acomat to pity her and spare her life as she is a woman, and calls on her familial relationship to him by speaking of Acomat's brother Alemshae: "Dost thou not pity Alemshae in me?" (12.77). He does not, and his attendants strangle her, but not before she compares his ruthlessness unfavorably to Bajazet's sensitivity and affirms that he has successfully transformed himself from a son into his father's foreign foe, as he had wanted: "Thou art not, false groom, son to Bajazet! / He would relent to hear a woman weep" (12.79-80).

And Zonara is correct about Bajazet. When the coffins of Mahomet and Zonara are brought before him, he "falls in a swoon" and after laments the betrayal by his son. Although revenge perpetrated in battle might seem to be the antidote to Bajazet's grief, he instead tries diplomacy, sending his cherished messenger, Aga, to "talk" to Acomat and bring him to "filial obedience" (14.83). Similar to the violent moves that occur in *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus*, Acomat responds to Aga's talk by pulling out the man's eyes and cutting off his hands. Aga returns to Bajazet who is then overcome by his grief to the point of paralysis:

Ah, Aga, Bajazet fain would speak to thee,

But sudden sorrow eateth up my words.

Bajazet, Aga, fain would weep for thee,

But cruel sorrow drieth up my tears.

Bajazet, Aga, fain would die for thee,

But grief hath weakened my poor agèd hands.
 How can he speak whose tongue sorrow hath tied?
 How shall he live, that full of misery
 Calleth for death, which will not let him die? (15.24-32)

Here, Bajazet sounds similar to Titus Andronicus in the manner in which he is indulging in his grief, but he does not ever experience that *Titus* moment of turning from grief to rage and vengeance. Unable to lead an army against Acomat to squash his rebellion or to lead anything else for that matter, Bajazet ends up following the bad counsel of Mustaffa who tells him to have Selimus lead the army against Acomat. Selimus then sends a Jew with poison to kill his father and Aga who have exiled themselves since Selimus declared himself emperor.¹⁹ Much like *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*, which I will discuss later, the Jew only enters the play for a brief interlude to undo and destroy the other characters. In *Selimus*, he also destroys himself. When Bajazet is informed that he has drunk poison, he again speaks of his son in conjunction with potential foreign invaders and with the Jew, the foreigner already residing in his own territory:

Ah, wicked Jew! Ah, cursèd Selimus!
 How have the destines dealt with Bajazet,
 That none should cause my death but my own son!
 Had Ismael and his warlike Persians
 Pierced my body with their iron spears,
 Or had the strong unconquered Tonombey
 With his Egyptians took me prisoner

And sent me with his valiant mamelukes
 To be prey unto the crocodiles;
 It never would have grieved me half so much. (18.95-104).

This passage foreshadows the play's ending speech because of the juxtaposition of native or natural with foreign empires and nations. *Selimus* ends triumphantly when the title character speaks directly to the audience: "So Selimus hath proved a cockatrice / And clean consumed all the family / Of noble Ottoman, except himself. / And now to you, my neighbor emperors, / That durst lend aid to Selim's enemies: / Sinam, those soldans of the Orient, / Egypt and Persia, Selimus will quell" (29.64-70). By the end of the play, Selimus has been responsible for killing not only his dad but also his brothers Corcut and Acomat, along with others. Greene was emulating the success of Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays when he wrote *Selimus*, and the play refers several times to *Tamburlaine*. The murders in the course of the play are certainly meant to draw audiences in and keep them watching, since the conclusion boasts of how "the second part shall greater murders tell" (6). However, Selimus is also set up as a hero in the conclusion in the manner of *Tamburlaine* in *Tamburlaine I*. It is true that audiences did not enjoy *Selimus* quite as much as *Tamburlaine*: Greene never had to deliver the promised sequel. Something more is going on here besides just English audiences receiving a thrill by watching the Turkish royal family destroy itself from within.

So why depict this sequence for the Ottomans? It resonates with England's own experience of their monarchs turning on their family members. Carole Levin writes about Elizabeth's relationship with her siblings, half sister Mary and half brother Edward and how it was affected by the fact that they were royals. When Edward was near death, he was persuaded

by the Duke of Northumberland to will the throne to Lady Jane Grey, his cousin, because she was married already and Elizabeth and Mary were not. The fear was that Elizabeth or Mary could wed a foreigner. Northumberland summoned Mary and Elizabeth to travel to be with Edward as he approached death, but the summons was a ruse because Edward was already gone; Northumberland wanted to have Elizabeth and Mary close by, so he could prevent them in any way from interfering with Lady Jane Grey's succession. Both Mary and Elizabeth realized they were being set up and did not complete their travels to London.²⁰ After the 1554 rebellion led by Thomas Wyatt against Mary's proposed marriage to Philip of Spain, Mary had Elizabeth committed to the Tower because she believed her to be involved despite her denials.²¹ Thus, Elizabeth was fearful on several occasions that she would be killed by her half sister or those affiliated with her half brother.

As sovereign, Elizabeth had to order the execution of her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots because of the Babington conspiracy of 1586 meant to place her on the throne. Also the brothers John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Edmund Langley, Duke of York, initiated the earlier Wars of the Roses, resulting in cousins killing each other in battle. Levin discusses how Elizabeth was rumored to have many other half siblings of her father Henry VIII besides Mary and Edward, though they were all clearly illegitimate. One such sibling was Sir John Perrott who was committed to the Tower for treason against Elizabeth (85-6). Finally, Levin, quoting Lena Orlin, points out that Elizabeth considered herself to be a sister to monarchs in other countries and that she "even called herself 'sister' when she signed a letter to the King of Morocco" (85). Therefore, England had classical precedents (Roman emperors) and domestic precedents for how justice and retention of power sometimes requires a ruler to kill family members. The plays that depict Islam portray cases in which this kind of slaying has gone awry, and the sultan does not

have the capacity to exercise sound judgment over when it is necessary to achieve justice and when to extend mercy. When writing about the subjects of empire and colonization, the playwrights are compelled again and again to treat the issues of justice and mercy. It is as though they are trying to discover how an empire can be ruled justly and what place mercy has in ruling it.

IV: The Courageous Turk

While *Selimus* is a straightforward extinguishment of family members before colonizing others, *The Courageous Turk* (performed 1619; published 1632?) is a bit more complicated because the impetus for the sultan Amurath's conquest of territory that propels the play's plot is his family allegiance to his father. The ties of the family tree though do not extend as strongly to his daughter and son-in-law once he decides to resume war, although he is eventually moved by pity at one point to exercise mercy toward them.

The first half of the play is marked by Amurath's killing of his Christian concubine Eumorphe. He kills her because of the relationship he had with his father. His tutor, Lala Shahin, believes that Amurath is neglecting his duty to wage war and expand the empire in favor of love, so he pretends to be Orchanes, Amurath's father's ghost. Shahin announces his strategy to persuade Amurath to forsake his love for Eumorphe; he will wait until Amurath plans to sleep with Eumorphe and then "will in disguise / Seeme his deceased Fathers apparition: / And by all tyes of children to their Parents, / Bid him forsake that vile bewitching woman" (2.1.430-33). Thus, Amurath privileges his connection to his family, his father-son relationship and possibly the supernatural, in order to cast away his connection to the Christian Other ("Heere Amurath

cuts off Eumorphes head, shewes it to the Nobles." [2.5]). The scene is similar to the ending scene in *Selimus* because it involves a killing close to home in order to move outward and conquer other territories. Close to home in the case of *The Courageous Turk* is not the family, as in *Selimus*, but it is someone whom Amurath held close in his affections and sexual desires. Relinquishing this connection between self and other readies him for conquest: "Now Tutor, shall our swords be exercised, / In ripping up the breasts of Christians, / [. . .] / On then for *Thracia*, for he surely shall / That conquers first himself, soone conquer all" (2.5. 720-25). He has successfully controlled his passion for Eumorphe. His self-government of his own passions becomes the foundation for subjugating other nations.

Once Amurath does move away from a focus on love to a focus on war, he begins with conquest of territories held by his own family members. Aladin, son-in-law to Amurath and king of Caramania, discusses how Amurath ruthlessly attacks his kingdom and how he will ask the sultan's own daughter, his wife, to stop: "The unnaturalst creatures not forget / Their love to those whom they do know their own! / My wife's his daughter; since we cannot stand / His fury longer, she shall swage his wrath" (4.4.1350-53). One of the nobles replies, "Why then (my Lord) array your selfe in weeds, / Of a Petitioner: take the Queene along, / And your two children; they may move his eyes; / For, desperate sores aske desperate remedies" (4.4.1356-1359). Thus, the nobleman and Aladin assume that his own relatives pleading for mercy will be sufficiently moving to the sultan to cause him to cease his attacks.

Amurath proclaims that he intends to sacrifice Aladin's two sons at which point Aladin's wife begs for Amurath's pity.

All's Wife: (Deare father) let thy fury rush on me!

 Within these intrailles sheath thine unsatiate sword,

And let this ominous, and too fruitfull wombe,
 Be torne in sunder? For from thence those Babes,
 Tooke all their crimes; error made them guilty,
 'Twas Natures fault, not their; O if affection
 Can worke then; now shew a true Fathers Love,
 If not, appease those murdering thoughts with me:
 For as *Jocasta* pleaded with her sonnes
 For their deare Father, so to a Father I
 For my deare Babes and husband; husband, father,
 Which shall I first embrace?

[. . .]

Look on thy child

With pardoning lookes, not with a Warriars eye: (5.1.1434-1449)

Aladin's wife invokes her own father-daughter relationship to Amurath in order to have her sons spared: in killing them, Amurath would be ripping open his own daughter's womb. She entreats him to set aside his warrior's role that he assumes at what he believes to be his own father's request. Amurath is then being asked to align his allegiance with one or the other of his family relationships – either that between him and his father or that between him and his daughter.

Amurath's ensuing speeches are about how he fears his children's plotting to overthrow him and thus cannot trust them: "We see a little Bullocke, 'mongst an heard / Growes on a sudden tall, and in the Fields, / Frolicks so much, he makes his Father yeild" (5.1.1487-1490). This interest in the betrayal of "nature," that is children's betrayal of parents, indicates the play's preoccupation with self destruction and with the self turning on itself that is shown elsewhere. It

cannot merely be that the English audience enjoyed seeing the Turks self destruct because the play likewise discusses how the Christians turn on one another, as I explained in my opening.

Aladin's wife entreats her children to beg for Amurath's mercy, but rather than beg for themselves, their filial obedience has them asking Amurath to witness their father's cries (first child) and offering their mother a napkin to wipe her tears (second child). Amurath's daughter kneels one last time to her father, and Amurath capitulates to the pleas for him "to use mild Warriors pittty" (5.1.1520):

Amurath: Rise (my deere child) as Marble against raine,
 So I at these obedient showers, melt!
 Thus I doe raise thy husband: thus thy Babes:
 Freely admitting you to former state.
 But Aladin, wake not our wrath againe!
 Patience growes fury that is ofter stirred;
 When Conquerors waxe calme, and cease to hate,
 The conquered should not dare to reiterate.
 Be thou our sonne and friend.

Although Amurath has expressed fear of his daughter, son-in-law, and grandsons rising against him in rebellion, he puts aside that fear. He is likely convinced to do so by his daughter's complete submission as she "prayer" before him and the way that she emphasizes the helplessness of his grandsons: "can ere these ungrowne strengths repaire / their Fathers battered Cities?" (5.1.1520-21).

It proves correct that Amurath did not have to fear any rebellion from his daughter and son-in-law. Yet at the end of the play, Amurath loses his life because of attempting to enact a ceremonial scene of mercy toward a wounded Christian, one meant to reflect on his greatness and magnanimity: “Ha, ha, by *Mahomet* and we are weary now: / Some Mercy shall lay Victory asleep. / It will a Lawreath prove to this great strife / ‘Mongst all these murdered to give one his life, / So we’ll descend” (5.4.1766-1770). Amurath descends to Cobelitz, the Christian captain, who rises up and stabs him fatally with his dagger. Thus, *The Courageous Turk* is indeed showing that the Ottoman Turk fails to achieve the mean between granting mercy and obtaining justice that would allow him to govern effectively. He vacillates throughout the play, lacking clarity about when to offer mercy or not, allying with the supernatural specter of his father against his daughter, and finally being undone by a self-aggrandizing display of mercy toward a Christian on the battlefield.

V: The Travels of the Three English Brothers

Even though the siblings of the English royal family did sometimes pose threats to one another, this type of interaction did not define the attitude of Protestant England to brotherhood. *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* demonstrates a Protestant view of loyal brotherhood. Toward the end of the play, one of the brothers, Robert Sherley is confronted by the Persian Sophy about his failure to kill his Turkish prisoners as he should have. He reports that he did not kill them because he intended to use them to ransom his brother Thomas Sherley, captured and imprisoned by the sultan. He speaks about himself and his brothers to one of the Sophy’s noblemen Calimath, brother to Halibeck. Calimath and Halibeck are Persians who conspire against the Sherley brothers throughout the play, and here, Calimath joins with the Persian Sophy

in calling for Robert's death. Thus, the play pits the admirable Protestant Sherley brothers against the scheming Muslim brothers. Robert Sherley tells Calimath

Your ears will hear no reason, Calimath.
 Thou hast a brother, Persian. So have I:
 A prisoner brother. To redeem his life,
 That all this while lies on the edge of death,
 I saved these prisoners. Wert to do again,
 Again I'd venture. Have ye shapes of men
 And want their spirits? We in all are three
 Sons of one father, branches of one tree.
 Should a rough hand but violently tear
 One scion from a tree, the rest must bear
 Share in the hurt. The smallest wound that drains
 Blood from our breasts empties our father's veins. (11.156-66)²²

The previous plays that I have discussed portray brothers killing brothers, sons killing fathers, fathers about to kill daughter, and uncles about to kill nieces. Conversely, this passage constructs brothers who are integrally connected to one another and to their father. Such a connected family tree contrasts greatly with the other plays that I have been mentioning in which family connections are severed through intra-familial killings. It contrasts greatly even with the next part of the play in which the Persian Sophy is on the verge of killing his niece because it is possible that she loves Robert Sherley and it is possible that Sherley wishes to marry her as part

of a scheme to become the next ruler of Persia. Calimath has led him to believe as much, although he tests his niece and finds it not to be true and then spares her life.

The Travels of the Three English Brothers is a patriotic play that minimizes overall cultural differences between the Persians and the English and religious differences between Protestant England and Catholic Rome. The Turk becomes the enemy, and the ultimate symbol of cultural and religious difference for both the Sherley brothers and the Persian Sophy. However, even the “Great Turk” is eventually shown to possess goodwill and diplomacy toward England when he releases Thomas Sherley, his prisoner, at King James’s request. But even though cultural differences between Persians and English are erased as much as possible, the religious difference of Christian mercy remains visible, even in Scene 1 when Sir Anthony Sherley and the Sophy discuss the English custom regarding prisoners of war:

Sir Anthony. These are our prisoners.

Sophy. Why do they live?

Sir Anthony. In this I show the nature of our wars.

It is our clemency in victory

To shed no blood upon a yielding foe.

Sometimes we buy our friend’s life with our foe’s;

Sometimes for gold, and that hardens valour

When he that wins the honour gets the spoil.

Sometimes for torment we give weary life:

Our foes are such that they had rather die

Than to have life in our captivity.

Sophy We never heard of honour until now. (I.102-111)

Anthony Sherley speaks of “torment” at the end of the speech, which could be seen as a parallel to the torture that the Great Turk uses on his brother Thomas Sherley later in the play. However, early modern audiences would not have been likely to align the later Ottoman torture with what Anthony Sherley speaks of here because he is merely saying that sometimes prisoners are kept alive, when they would prefer not to remain in Christian captivity. Granting them life could be a type of torture, but it could as easily be interpreted as merciful. Therefore, it is likely that the Sophy’s reaction of admiration would characterize the audience response anticipated by the playwrights.

Sir Anthony also speaks about “the greatest” difference that separates the English and the Persians, which is religious observance or “inward offices”:

All that makes up this earthly edifice
 By which we are called men is all alike.
 Each may be the other’s anatomy;
 [. . .]
 Only art in a peculiar change
 Each country shapes as she best can piece them.
 But that’s not all: our inward offices
 Are most at jar – would they were not, great prince!
 Your favour here if I outstrip my bounds.
 We live and die, suffer calamities,
 Are underlings to sickness, fire, famine, sword.

We are all punished by the same hand and rod,
 Our sins are all alike; why not our God? (I.164-180).

This passage is important because while the play does depict cordial relations between the English and Persians and an alliance between them against the Turk, it also recognizes the outer limits regarding how much difference can be erased. Differences in religious observance remain, and the Sophy “pay[s] devotion” to “Mortus Ali,” (I.87-8) and not Christ.

In the introduction to the play, Anthony Parr points out that both the Turk (Sunni Islam) and Zariph the Jew are demonized while Persians (Shi’a Islam) and Catholic Rome are respected and admired. Parr suggests that the playwrights may have been aware that Anthony Sherley had in reality converted to Rome, and that as a result of that and of “belief in the Turkish threat,” they “omit any hostility towards the Catholic powers, making the vision of a pan-Christian contract with enlightened paganism the centre of their play.”²³ Thus, the depiction of cultural difference in this play, as in many plays that depict Islam, is complex. Rarely do these plays portray just one non-English group or one religion other than Protestantism, which is why Daniel Vitkus has referred to them as multicultural, despite criticisms by some other scholars who believe that the term connotes too much cooperation and tolerance to signify the plays accurately.²⁴ It is difficult then to know which specific English foreign relations structure the interpretation of *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*. Is it those between England and Persia, between England and the Ottoman Empire, between England and Catholic Europe? Which ethnicities, religious or racial groups form the center of the play? These are some of the central questions that make generalizing about interpretations of the plays brought together under the rubric of “Turk plays” challenging. The questions need to be reexamined within the context

of each specific play. For example, in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*, bringing Persia and England or Protestantism and Catholicism closer together may mean driving a greater wedge between the Ottoman Turks and England than open trade relations between the two groups might suggest. It also results in a much more one-dimensional and demonized image of the Turk than in *The Renegado*, for example.

Yet religious difference, particularly as it relates to mercy, becomes the ultimate difference that separates the English and the Ottomans and the English and Persians as the play repeatedly demonstrates. Mercy is a greater difference between English and Ottomans than between English and Persians in the play because as in *The Renegado*, the Ottomans are shown to lack an outlet for mercy. The Sophy, on the other hand, is sympathetic to the idea of extending mercy to people, even if the two Persian brothers, Calimath and Halibeck do wish mercilessly to destroy the Sherley brothers because they envy how the Sophy favors them. Parr points out that the playwrights borrow the names Calimath and Halibeck from Ottoman characters in other plays, which may show how closely the Ottomans were connected with lack of mercy: if Persian characters are to be shown as merciless, they must be provided with Ottoman sounding names. Finally of course, the English brothers are consistently shown to extend mercy to enemies so that the play, much like *The Renegado*, does create a Protestant hierarchy surrounding this religious difference. War and politics that lacks provisions for extending mercy lacks a Protestant foundation that renders it acceptable policy.

VI: Conclusion

The importance of religious difference in the dramas depicting Islam has been a point of contention among literary critics for the last decade. In Nabil Matar's 1998 *Islam in Britain*, he

argued that dramas that depict Islam, along with theological writings, did not reflect real encounters between England and Islamic empires and that the dramas always culminated in Christian victories.²⁵ With these arguments, he motivated a series of responses from scholars such as Daniel Vitkus, Matthew Dimmock, and Jonathan Burton who argued that the dramas were much more heterogeneous in their representations and that many times the pragmatics of economic and political relations between England and the Ottoman Empire influenced them more than a wish to stage a Christian victory for English audiences. In this chapter, I refocus scholarship about dramas depicting Islam from the context of economic and political negotiations between England and the Ottoman Empire to how religious difference is being treated within them. The plays grapple with different attitudes toward mercy and justice, which are the issues around which religious differences coalesce over and over again in the plays. Ultimately, a religious victory is constructed via these issues, but it is not the one-dimensional Christian victory that Matar contends, one that elides differences within Christianity and within Islam in order to dichotomize the two faiths and pit them against one another. Instead, a specifically Protestant victory is achieved through a careful investigation within the plays of how England viewed the approach of different sects of Christianity and different sects of Islam to extending mercy to one's enemies. Thus, religious difference deserves more nuanced attention as to how it functions within the plays than the focus on economic and political negotiations and context in the criticism of these plays has allowed.

¹Valerie M. Warrior, trans. *Livy, The History of Rome, Books 1-5* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 89-90.

²James B. Atkinson and David Sices, *The Sweetness of Power, Machiavelli's Discourses & Guicciardini's Considerations* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2006), 69, note 4

³ Atkinson and Sices, 266, note 1.

⁴Thomas Goffe, *The Courageous Turk or Amurath the First: a Tragedie* (London: B. Alsop and T. Fauucet for Richard Meighen, 1632). *Early English Books Online*. Worldcat (606547717).

⁵Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 97-8.

⁶A number of these plays such as *Selimus, the Courageous Turk*, and *The Raging Turk* are ostensibly history plays that also have an affinity with the revenge tragedy. They are history told in the form of the revenge tragedy.

⁷As Burton has argued, Greville's *Mustapha* transposes England's issues into the context of the Ottoman royal family, resulting in a sympathetic depiction of the Ottomans. (Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624*, (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing, 2005), 180-95).

⁸Several articles treat mercy and justice in *Othello* from slightly different perspectives. Maurice Hunt argues that although *Othello* is set in Catholic Venice, Calvinist predestination is its main concern. Desdemona is a reprobate, the most offensive kind of non-elect individual, and consistent with Shakespeare's other critical and unfavorable views of predestination, he shows how cruel it is for someone as charitable as Desdemona to be predestined to damnation (Maurice Hunt, *Shakespeare's Religious Allusiveness: Its Play and Tolerance* (Ashgate, 2004), 97-124). Also with an eye toward the Reformation, Robert N. Watson reads *Othello* as a loose allegory about salvation by faith alone, "where the marriage between Othello and Desdemona represents the passionate but troubled marriage between the sinner's soul and its Savior (Robert N. Watson,

“Othello as Reformation Tragedy,” *In the Company of Shakespeare: Essays on English Renaissance Literature in Honor of G. Blakemore Evans* (New Jersey and London: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press and Associated University Press, 2002), 65-96; 66).

⁹A section of the 1583 edition of John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* is titled *Prophecies of the Turk and Pope, which of them is the Greater Antichrist*. (John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* 1583 edition (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), Book 6, page 790, accessed October 27, 2011, <http://www.johnfoxe.org>).

¹⁰K.J. Kesselring, *Mercy and Authority in the Tudor State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13.

¹¹Kesselring, 13.

¹²Kesslering quotes from Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Gouvernour* and discusses how “Elyot pointed to the Roman emperors as exemplary models for emulation and quoted Seneca’s definition of clemency: ‘a temperance of the mind of him that has power to be avenged.’ He asked rulers to remember the divine origin of their power and their own need for God’s mercy” (20).

¹³Kesselring, 91.

¹⁴For critical commentary on this play, see Bindu Malieckal, “Wanton Irreligious Madness”: Conversion and Castration in Massinger’s *The Renegado*” *Essays in Arts and Sciences* 31(2002): 25-42 and Peter F. Mullany, “Massinger’s *The Renegado*: Religion in Stuart Tragicomedy,” *Genre* 5 (1972): 138-52.

¹⁵Daniel Vitkus, ed. *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and the Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 241-344. All subsequent references to Phillip Massinger’s *The Renegado* will be to this edition of the play.

¹⁶ OED, 2d edn., s.v., “caesar,” I.

¹⁷ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 115. See also Will Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship in Early Modern England*, (Aldershot, Hants, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).

¹⁸ Daniel Vitkus, ed. *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and the Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 56-148. All subsequent references to Robert Greene’s *Selimus* will be to this edition of the play.

¹⁹ Burton discusses the strategic use of Jews alongside Turks in *Traffic and Turning*, 196-232.

²⁰ Carole Levin, “Elizabeth I among her Siblings,” in *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh, (England and Vermont: Ashgate, 2006), 80-1.

²¹ Levin, 82-85.

²² Anthony Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays: The Travels of the Three English Brothers, The Sea Voyage, and the Antipodes* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 55-134. All subsequent quotations come from this edition of the text.

²³ “Introduction” to *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, 10-11.

²⁴ Burton takes issue with the use of the term “multicultural” in his introduction, 12.

²⁵ Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 20.

CONCLUSION

I have been careful to acknowledge throughout this project that instances of kin killing in early modern drama were not confined to the Turks or Moors. However, the reason that Turks and Moors warrant examination through the lens of kin killing is because the early modern period would have viewed their kin killing as the norm while the kin killing of other religious and racial groups was often considered more the exception. Histories such as Richard Knolles' *Generall Historie of the Turks* or Protestant religious-historical texts such as John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* primed English playwrights to stage stories about family killing in the dramas that depict Islam. English playwrights used this idea of Muslim kin killing as the norm, either to disown or to highlight, the kin killing in their own history as well as to warn the English on a basic level not to be like a Turk.

As kin killers, Turks were described in histories as without pity or compassion, and the fact that their killing did not stop at the boundary of family served as proof that they were devoid of compassion. Called pity or compassion or alternatively "remorse," this emotion is highlighted in the dramas depicting Islam because they generally feature scenes in which one family member implores another to feel pity and to spare his life. Pity, rather than love or some other emotion, is most frequently characterized as a natural emotion that should be felt among family members and between parent and child in the dramas depicting Islam.

I have also argued that through kin killing, many of the dramas that feature Muslim characters make an argument against empire by dramatizing that control and maintenance of an empire often necessitate the ruthless self sacrifice or self destruction of kin killing. The plays explore the manner in which the administration of justice in a realm requires a ruler who has the

capacity to feel pity for elements of sameness between himself and other human beings. While the history plays such as *Richard II*, with which I opened my first chapter, look into a past in which England's dynastic disputes resulted in civil war, the dramas that depict Islam warn England against a future of empire building through stories in which fathers kill sons and daughters, sons kill fathers, and brothers kill one another and in which the demands of living in an empire have obliterated pity among family members and countrymen.

I have not explored images of the Jew in the early modern dramas depicting Islam, although the Jew frequently appeared within these plays. Among the many negative traits attributed to the Jew during the early modern period, a pitiless and merciless nature, as well as kin killing, were two possibilities shared with a Turk or Moor. For instance the two most famous Jewish characters of the early modern stage, Shylock and Barabas, appear in Islamic dramas that refer to Turks and Moors or that are set in Ottoman territories. For example, Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* demonstrates that the idea of the Turk pitying Antonio becomes a way to measure the injustice of the Jew's Old Testament justice

Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
 That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
 To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
 Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
 Than is thy strange apparent cruelty
 And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh
 Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
 But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,

Forgive a moiety of the principal;
 Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
 That have of late so huddled on his back,
 Enow to press a royal merchant down
 And pluck commiseration of this state
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
 From stubborn Turks and Tartars never train'd
 To offices of tender courtesy
 We all expect a gentle answer Jew.

(4.1.16-34)¹

Shylock is a stranger in Venice, and his cruelty and the possibility of his pity are described in relation to his status as a foreigner. His “cruelty” is “strange” because it is both expected of a Jew, a foreigner, and also from the Duke’s perspective, it is a foreign practice for the Venetians, although Shakespeare does undermine these distinctions as he does those between the Romans and Goths in *Titus Andronicus*. The possibility of Shylock’s “mercy” and “pity” are also described as “strange” because they are unexpected, unlike his cruelty. The Duke’s contention that even a Turk would be moved to pity Antonio’s situation shows that the Jew’s insistence on “hav[ing] the due and forfeit of my bond” renders him more monstrous than the Turk (4.1.37). Even the Turk and Tartar in this case (and Tartars were essentially very similar to and lumped together with Turks for the early moderns) are redeemable, while Shylock is the unredeemable foreigner, incapable of extending mercy.

Additionally, in Christopher Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta*, the Jew Barabas kills his daughter Abigail with the help of the Turkish slave Ithamore. He does so for reasons quite distinct from

what one might expect from a Turkish character. For the English, one of the best known reasons that a Turk would kill kin was because of power struggles over the sultanate exemplified in instances when the Ottoman sultan killed his sons or the sons each other in order to gain the coveted position. At the same time, the English viewed the Turks as having great military prowess, so when the Scythian Tamburlaine kills his son under the paradigm of “martial justice,” he acts in a manner that the English would also expect from a Turk. On the other hand, Barabas kills Abigail because she betrays her father’s religion, as he says of Abigail: “For she that varies from me in *belief* / Gives great presumption that she loves me not; Or loving, doth dislike of something done” (3.4.10; emphasis mine).² When done by a Turk, Moor, Scythian, or Roman in the plays I have explored, family killing is generally stripped of overt religious motivation. Either imperial honor or imperial conquest stands out much more in the plays

In the interest of countering Matar’s assertion that dramas depicting Islam never showed a positive representation of a Muslim, critics have justifiably rushed to find positive images or to prove that the dramas were not disconnected from English and European experiences with Muslims and thus were more multifaceted than pure negative stereotyping would allow. However, I have chosen to examine one of the significant recurring negative images and the complicated uses to which it was put in the dramas. I have also chosen to provide a more nuanced analysis of some common emotions portrayed on the early modern stage in Islamic dramas. While anxiety and desire are certainly important, an analysis of pity and compassion in the Islamic dramas demonstrates how English playwrights were seeking to work out the justice or injustice, as it were, of the political structure of empires, especially regarding the rules of succession. This was relevant for the English because the succession worked much differently in an empire than in the English monarchy, yet the English monarchy still had its share of dynastic

disputes. Therefore, thinking about empire spoke to the present and to the possibility of English expansion in the future.

¹William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare, Updated Fourth Edition*, ed. David Bevington. (New York: Longman, 1997).

²Christopher, Marlowe. *The Jew of Malta*, in *The Complete Plays: Christopher Marlowe*, ed. J.M. Dent (Rutland, Vermont, 2000).

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